KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY PUBLICATION NO. 2

CONCEPT OF GANESHA

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K. N. SOMAYAJI

KALPATHARU RESEARCH ACADEMY
BANGALORE
1983

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CONCEPT OF GANESHA

By
DAIVAJNA K. N. SOMAYAJI

KALPATARU RESEARCH ACADEMY
BANGALORE

CONCEPT OF GANESHA—Written by Daivajna K.N. Somayaji. Published by Mr. G. N. K. Prasad for Kalpataru Research Academy, Bangalore. Pages X+69+38 Plates

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1983

Price : Rs. 45-00

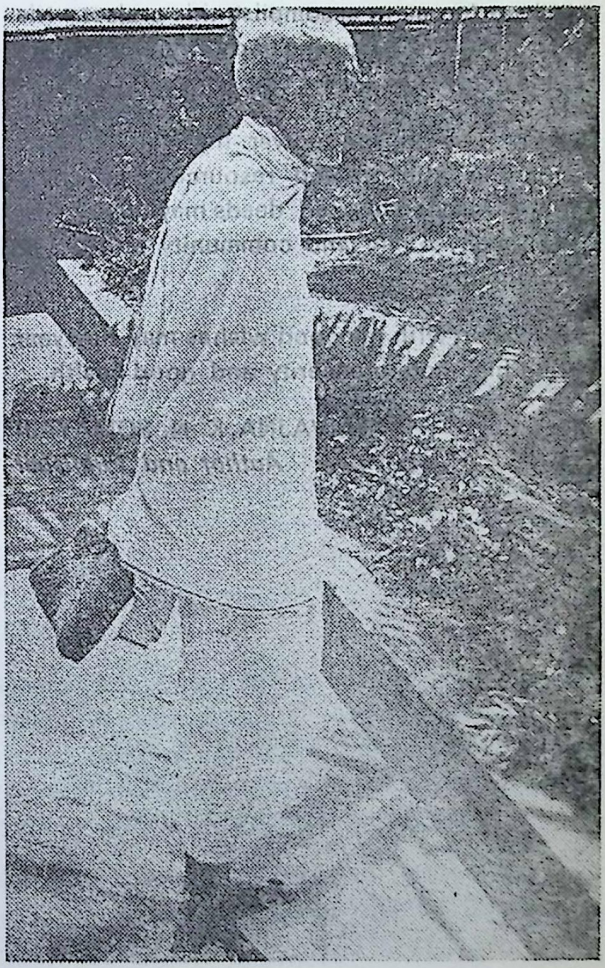
JACL-KRC
003678

Cover page art : M. S. Murthy
Illustrations : Prof. S. K. Ramachandra Rao

Exclusive Distributors :
Bangalore Book Distributors
643, 16th 'B' Main, 4th Cross
Koramangala 3rd Block
BANGALORE - 560 034

Prited at :
Lotus Printers, Bangalore

DEDICATED TO
MY FATHER



While every creative work needs someone to visualise and some to back up. I should express my heartfull thanks, to particularly shri Mohan Saraogi, Managing Director, Bhagatpur, Tea Co., Ltd., my extreme friend but for whose selfless help it would have been difficult for me to accomplish this project. His fine gesture of supplying papers for this project is most gratifying.

I pray to the power that he bestow enormous strength and resources unto him, so that his kind hearted deeds may bring name and fame to him and community at large in benefitted.

Laden with my good wishes may newyear bring him more prosperity and good health.

DAIVAJNA K. N. SOMAYAJI
Author and Publisher

FOREWORD

ಓಂ ಗಣಾನಾಂ ತ್ವಾಂ ಗಣಪತಿಂ
ಹವಾಮಹೇ ಕವಿಂ ಕವಿನಾಮುಪಶ್ರವಸ್ತಮಮ್ ।
ಜ್ಯೇಷ್ಠರಾಜಂ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣಾಂ ಬ್ರಹ್ಮಣಸ್ಪತ ಆ ನಃ
ಶೃಣ್ವನ್ನೂತಿಭಿಃ ಸೀದ ಸಾದನಮ್ ॥

The above is the first Mantra in the twenty third sukta in the second Mandala of Rugveda (Reg. II 23. 1). Therein, we find the word Ganapathi used in the Rigveda as an attribute of Brahmanaspati (the Lord of prayer or holy lore).

The Aitreya Bramana expressly says that the Mantra is addressed to Brahmanaspati (Ait. Br. IV 4).

It has been accepted that Brahmanaspati referred to in the Rigveda is none else than Ganapati himself.

Ganesha is the most popular God in these days and it is the practice to invoke him at the beginning of every important, undertaking or rite. He is the God of wisdom, the presiding deity of literature, the bestower of success and the destroyer of obstacles.

Ganapati is popular not only among all schools of Hindu thoughts but also among all sects of Hindus. He has his influence not only on Hindus but also on the people of other communities. He has extended his influence far and wide and even beyond the boundaries of Bharat.

Ganapati is the embodiment of 'Shabdabrahma', ಓಂ, pranava. It is in that sense that he is Brahaspati and Brahmanaspati.

The idol of Ganapati is the deitification of ಓಂ. Dwi-bhuja Ganesh is considered to be very ancient. One such idol is in Idagunji on the left bank of River Sharavati, in North Kanara

District. The idol clearly brings out the idea that Ganapati is none else than 'Pranava'-Shabda-brahma. If one were to give a shape to ॐ and deify it, that would be Ganapati.

Daivajna K. N. Somayaji is rendering yeoman's service in bringing out this book on Ganapati. It is the result of his vast and deep study, contemplation and research. He deserves all our praise for his erudition and research.

I am sure that the book is bound to be of great help to all the devotees of Shri Ganesh in understanding the concept of Ganesh both in its depth and width.

I wish the enterprise all success.

May Lord Ganesh remove all obstacles and bestow His blessings and pave the way for the glorious succes of this small enterprise :

Bangalore
4-1-1984

JUSTICE GAJANAN SABHAHITH
High Court, Karnataka

PREFACE

Ganapati is the theme of everlasting interest. Many have been the publications on the icongraphy, symbolism, cultie significance and legends concerning this most popular deity in India. Numerous are the theories that have been formulated to explain and interpret the mystery that surrounds the origin, development and meaning of this rather grotesque but nevertheless absorbing form. And many are the iconographic conceptions in which Ganapati has been moulded, projected and worshipped.

A running account of all these details, focussing attention on the essentials, would doubtless be interesting to the layman. He might thus understand at one glance the scope and spread of the problem of Ganapati. Shri K. Narasimha Somayaji, Daivajna, who is the Director of the Kalpataru Research Academy, Bangalore, has attempted this task in the present compilation.

I hope it will be well received by the people, who will find here many interesting details about Ganapati's iconography, conceptualization and worship.

Bangalore-560 011 Prof. S. K. RAMACHANDRA RAO
3rd January 1983 *(President, Ayurveda Academy)*

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am happy to place in your hands the second publication of the Kalpataru Research Academy, Bangalore. It deals with Ganapathi, the patron-deity of learning, to which the Academy is devoted.

Kalpataru Research Academy, started in 1981, is an institution meant to promote study, research and publication in the field of Veda, Vedanta, Vedanga and allied disciplines of Indloogy. One of its major activities is to publish scholarly books in English and Sanskrit on the subjects mentioned above. The Academy also publishes a quarterly journal, containing learned articles. A book on Sri - chakra was published in 1982, and was very well received by the public. It is hoped that this book on Ganapathi will also be received in the same manner.

The present publication has been compiled by me from several sources, and I hope it will be found useful by scholars as well as laymen. The book includes line-drawings made by Professor S. K. Ramachandra Rao, from sculptures in stone and bronze and I thank him for permission to include them here.

I gratefully acknowledge the help which I have received in this publication from Sri Mohan Saraogi, Sri S. R. Sudarshan, Sri M. S. Sriharsha of the Kannada Prabha, Artist Mr. M. S. Murthy and Mr. G. N. K. Prasad. I also thank Lotus Printers, for the speed and quality with which the book has been completed.

K. N. SOMAYAJI
Author and Publisher

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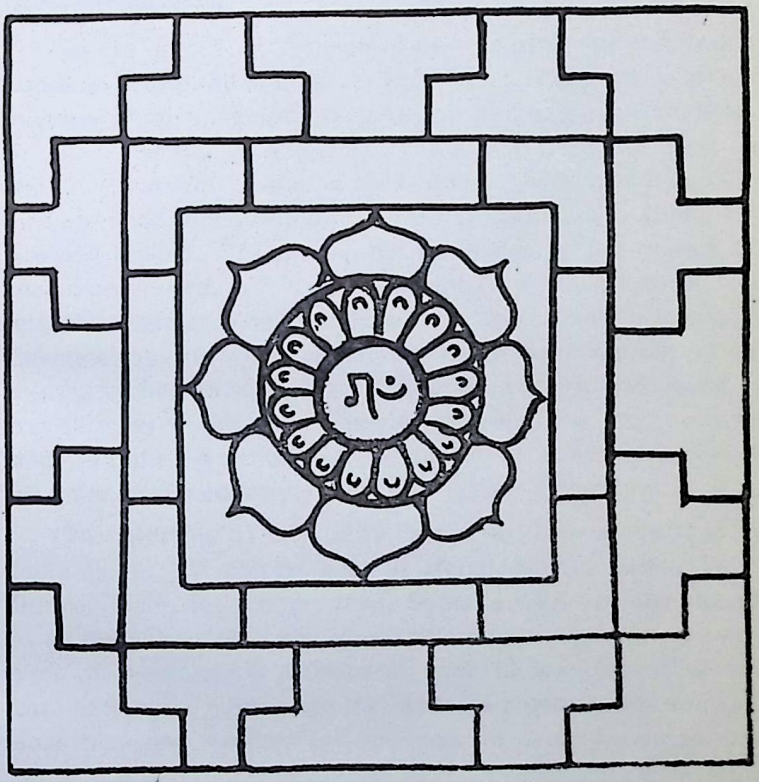
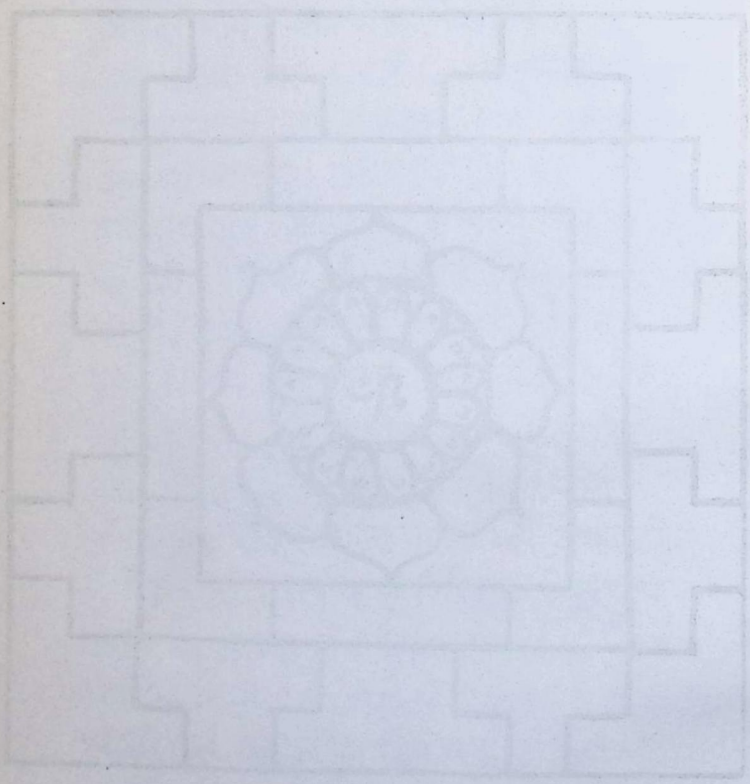
ॐ गं नमस्ते गणपतये । त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं तत्त्वमसि ।
त्वमेव केवलं कर्ताऽसि । त्वमेव केवलं धर्ताऽसि ।
त्वमेव केवलं हर्ताऽसि । त्वमेव सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्मासि ।
त्वं साक्षादात्मासि नित्यम् । ऋतं वच्मि । सत्यं वच्मि ।
अव त्वं माम् । अव वक्तारं । अव श्रोतारम् ।
अव दातारं । अव धातारं । अवानूचानमव शिष्यं ।
अव पुरस्तात् । अव दक्षिणात्तात् । अव पश्चात्तात् ।
अव चोर्ध्वात्तात् । अवाधरात्तात् । सर्वतो पाहि मां ।
पाहि समन्तात् । त्वं वाङ्मयस्त्वं चिन्मयः । त्वमानन्दमय-
स्त्वं ब्रह्ममयः । त्वं सच्चिदानन्दाद्वितीयोऽसि । त्वं
प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि । त्वं ज्ञानमयो विज्ञानमयोऽसि ।
सर्वं जगदिदं त्वत्तो जायते । सर्वं जगदिदं त्वत्तस्तिष्ठति ।
सर्वं जगदिदं त्वयि लयमेष्यति । सर्वं जगदिदं
त्वयि प्रत्येति । त्वं भूमिरापोऽनलोऽनिलो नभः ।
त्वं चत्वारि वाक्परिमिता पदानि । त्वं गुणत्रयातीतः ।
त्वं देहत्रयातीतः । त्वं कालत्रयातीतः । त्वं मूलाधार-
स्थितोऽसि नित्यम् । त्वं शक्तित्रयात्मकः । त्वां योगिनो
ध्यायन्ति नित्यम् । त्वं ब्रह्मा त्वं विष्णुस्त्वं रुद्रस्त्वमिन्द्र-
स्त्वमग्निस्त्वं वायुस्त्वं सूर्यस्त्वं चन्द्रस्त्वं ब्रह्म
भूर्भुवःस्वरोम् ॥ ७७७ ॥

ॐ गणपतये नमः । एकदन्ताय विद्महे वक्रतुण्डाय
धीमहि । तन्नो दन्तिः प्रचोदयात् ॥ ७७७ ॥



Ganapathi-mandala, with the
Seed-Syllable of Ganapathi, 'Gam'



Ganapati-mandala with the
Seed-Syllable of Ganapati, 'Gam'

CHAPTER I

THE CONCEPT OF GANESHA

INTRODUCTION

The influence of Ganapathi on the ethos of the Indian people is profound and pervasive. There is scarcely a village in India which does not have a temple dedicated to Ganapathi. There can hardly be found a home which does not have an idol of Ganapathi. Among the Hindus, those who begin any work of importance without first offering prayers to Ganapathi are few indeed. If there is any desire deeply felt, which remains unfulfilled, it is to the Elephant-God that we pray. No activity, whether it be writing a letter performing a marriage, constructing of house, appearing for an examination, or admitting a child to school, can be done without first invoking the blessing of this god. Ganapathi, being the most popular deity in India, is worshipped by almost all the castes, and in all parts of the country.

The worship of this deity is by no means confined to India alone. It can be seen in Nepal, China, Turkey Tibet, Burma, Siam, Indochina, Java, Sumatra, Borneo and Japan; in all these countries and in many more, there exists a tradition of worshipping Ganapathi, and idols representing him can be found. Although the deity is common to all these countries, the customs and manners of worship differ form place to place.

When exactly did the practice of worshipping Ganesha originate? The answer cannot yet be definitely given. There are scholars who claim that the concept of Ganesha can be discovered, even as early a as in the Vedic age i.e., about 8000 years ago. There is no doubt that the name of Ganapathi has been mentioned in Vedas. There are other scholars who opine that Ganapathi was a deity widely worshiped by the Dravidian inhabitants of this country even prior to the arrival of the

Aryans, and that this tradition was adopted and continued by the Aryans, albeit with some changes. According to this view, Ganapathi must be recognised as being the oldest of the deities

Whatever may be the difference of opinion regarding the beginning of the worship of this deity, it is certain that he has been worshipped since at least 2000 years. The present form in which Ganapathi is depicted was crystallised by about the 5th or the 6th century AD. Reliable authorities say that the ancient sculpture piece of Ganapathi such as the Shakthi-Ganapathi of Bhumar and the Sthanaka Ganapathi of Modheira, belong to the same period. It is thus clear that Ganapathi, as we know him today has been worshipped for more than one thousand years.

It is not known in what particular form Ganapathi was depicted in the early years of the Christian era. However, even by that time, he was the foremost among the Gods, since he has been mentioned in the 'Gatha-saptashati' of Hala and in the Varaha, the Vamana and the Brahma-Vaivarta Puranas. The pillar erected in Jodhpur and Patiala during 862 A.D has an inscription containing a verse extolling Ganesha. On the top of the pillar have been carved four figures of the deity, each facing a different direction. It is learnt that in Tibet and Nepal, during the 8th or 9th century A.D. ceremonies in honour of Ganapathi were being conducted.

The 'Panchayatana-Puja' started by Sankaracharya who lived probably in the early 6th century, includes Ganapathi. The liturgy has several verses in praise of Ganapathi; this was perhaps due to the fact that the Ganapathi cult had gained in strength and popularity during that time. It is also interesting that most of the Gods who are now being worshipped by us viz., Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti(Durga), Ganesha, Surya, and others have all been mentioned in the 'Panchayatana Puja' During the 6th or 7th century, Ganapathi was adopted even by the Tantrik cult.

While a lot of information is available regarding the nature, form and customs of worship of this deity, the various stages of worship cannot be explained with reference to the accurate date and time. The matter available to us at present is nevertheless interesting and trustworthy. Scholars have gone through almost all the existing references, and have tried to give an accurate description of the customs and tradition concerning Ganesha worship.

A line of research into the concept of Ganesha was first started by the Western scholars. Stevenson wrote an extensive and detailed account of the Ganesha cult as early as 1845 A. D. Winternitz compiled a book–'Ganesha in Mahabharata' in 1898. But the monograph on Ganesha given by Ananda Coomara-Swamy was the most note worthy account. It was published in 1928. In 1936, Alice Ghetty authored a book on Ganapathi giving detailed references, and containing many fine illustrations. This book is in the nature of a compendium of all the reference about Ganesha, but containing little original ideas.

Among the Indian authors the best is perhaps the work by Dr. Sampurnanand in Hindi; this book also deals with the influence of Ganapathi on Yoga and Tantra: Another valuable work on the conception of Ganapathi was written by Prof. S.K. Ramachandra Rao, in Kannada. His discussion on Ganapathi in his larger work on Indian Iconography (also in Kannada, Bangalore University) is also a mine of information and interpretations of mythology, folk involvement and esoteric texts bearing on Ganapathi. He has also prepared a large number of sketches from iconographic specimens, which are included in this book.

CHAPTER II

GANAPATHI IN VEDIC LITERATURE

It is customary to trace the early beginnings of any tradition in India from the *Rigveda*. Was Ganapathi being worshipped by the sages of *Rig-Veda*? The pantheon of gods found in the Veda is immense. But the elephant-headed, pot-bellied Genesha' the son of Rudra, is not to be found there. There is certainly mention of Rudra, but nothing about his family. However, the name 'Ganapathi' has been found in *Rig-Veda;* but this Ganapathi is the Lord of *Ganas* or (hordes of celestial beings). The reference is found in the 10th Mandala of Rig Veda:

गणानां त्वा गणपतिं हवामहे
कविं कवीनां उपमश्रवस्तमम् ।
ज्येष्ठराजं ब्रह्मणां ब्रह्मणस्पत
आ नः शृण्वन्नूतिभिः सीदसादनम् ॥

The Ganapathi mentioned here is not the Ganapathi we are today acquainted with. According to Sayanacharya, the commentator on the Veda, Ganapathi mentioned here is actually Brahmanaspati. 'Brahma' refers to the 'mantras' and the lord of the 'mantras' is Brahmanaspati. Hence this verse refers to Brhaspati, who is the master of the sacred word.

While this Ganapathi of *Rig-Veda* and the Ganapathi of our times have nothing in common, it is interesting that the Vedas also speak of one who is the lord of the *ganas* (hordes) This ideological seed has grown in course of time into a big tree. However this master of the hordes mentioned here is none other than Indra, the king of celestial beings

A relationship between Rudra, one of the Vedic gods, and Ganapathi as the later leader of hordes has been mentioned in *Shukla-Yajurveda,* which says that Rudra is the lord

of the *ganas* रूद्रस्य गणापत्यम् Another reference to Ganapathi is found in *Yajurveda*. It says that the horse used for the sacrifice such as the asvamedha is none ofher than Ganapathi in the guise of Vasu. During the Asvamedha sacrifice, the spouse of the Yajamana or the individual engaged in the performance of sacrifice is supposed to recline beside the horse used for the sacrifice and chant the following mantras :–

गणानां त्वां गणपतिं हवामहे
प्रियाणां त्वां प्रियपतिं हवामहे
निधीनां त्वां निधिपतिं हवामहे
वसो मम अहमजानि
गर्भधमत्वजासि गर्भधम् ॥

Here the Vasu who is variously called 'Ganapathi' 'Priyapathi' and 'Nidhipathi' is actually the horse being sacrificed. That deity in whose honour this verse is sung is also the horse. Ganapathi is referred to as the lord of the famale hordes.

In the Vedic parlance, the word 'gana' is employed to denote either a horde of people, a horde of gods, or a group of hymns (mantras). It is interesting that in *Shukla-Yajurveda*, the hymns: नमो गणपतिभ्यश्च वो नमः speaks of Ganapathi in plural. Mahidhara, the Vedic commentator while explaining the word 'Ganapathi', says "the kings who are the masters of the bhutas or the celestial spirits are each of them called a ganapathi".

The word Ganapathi occuring in *Taittariya-Samhita* has been explained by the commentators to mean Pasupathi, who is none other than Shiva. Thus, it would not be incorrect to suppose that the two words Ganapathi and Shiva have been used almost synonymously in the Vedic literature to refer to one and the same divinity.

CHAPTER III

SHIVA-GANAPATHI

The present conception of Ganapathi as being the son of Shiva and Parvathi has been formulated in the Puranas. It is in the Puranas that we find Ganapathi as the lord of the *Shiva-ganas* (hordes, gananatha) and as the door-keeper of Shiva *(dvarapalaka)*. But Shiva during this period was given the name Ganapathi. In *Valmiki-Ramayana,* Shiva has been called 'Ganesha', 'Lokapala', 'Mahabhaga', 'Mahesvara' etc. Ganesha was also described as Shiva is usually described as having the third eye in the centre of his forehead snakes as ornament, trident in one of his hands and moon upon his matted locks of hair.

The third 'adhyaya' of *Yajurveda* contains a verse which indicates the identity of Shiva and Ganapathi. While performing a sacrifice meant for fulfilment of desire or a Kamya-karma, the *purodhasha-rat* which is the sacrificial offering is to be buried in the ground while the following verse is recited.

एष ते रुद्र भागः। सह स्वाम्बिकया
तं जुषस्व स्वाहैष ते रुद्र भागः
आखुस्ते पशुः।

Shiva is here requested to come and partake of the offering of rat accompanied by his sister Ambika. This verse hints that the rat is the animal dear to Shiva and therefore an offering to be made of it. The 'Ganapathi' with whom we are hereconcerned, has the rat as his vehicle. It is not known how or when the rat become the carrier of Ganapathi. Perhaps the cause is the close relationship between Shiva and the 'Purodhasha' rat, during the time when Shiva was regarded as identical whith Ganapathi.

Another interesting aspect brought to light in the above verse is about Ambika or Parvathi being the sister of Shiva and not his wife. We can find this view even in the *Taittiriya-Samhita*. Sayanacharya explains the word "Swasra" as "being concerned like a sister". But this does not shed much light on the matter. We now recognise Ambika as the wife of Shiva. It is, however, clear that at one time she was regarded as the sister of Shiva. When and how exactly did Ambika who was originally his sister became the wife of Shiva is not clear By the time of *Taittiriya Aranvaka*, however Ambika is recognised as being the wife of Shiva.

The hymn 'Ganesha-Gayatri' was formulated during the age when Ganapathi and Shiva were conceived as being the names of one and the same deity. This hymn is found in *Taittiriya Aranyaka*. (10th prapathaka).

तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे वक्रतुण्डाय धीमहि।
तन्नो दन्तिः प्रचोदयात्।

The Puranas repeat this hymn with only a slight alteration, the word "ekadantaya" is substituted for *"tatpurushaya"*..... It is more over true that the 'Ganesha-Gayatri' has been based on the 'Rudra-gayatri', which is

तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे महादेवाय धीमहि।
तन्नो रुद्रः प्रचोदयात्।

The word 'tatpurusha' occuring in both the Gayatri-hymns is meaningful. Tatpurusha is one of the five faces of Shiva, the others being Ishana, Sadyojata, Aghora and Vamadeva. That this word is present even in the 'Ganesha-Gayatri' is illuminating. Similar to the 'Shiva-lingas 'Ganapathi-lingas are also natural objects and therefore untouched by implements used by men; red stones representing Ganapathi icons are to be found. A rock named Bheemaswami which lies below the Haraparvata near Srinagar is painted with red colour, and is worshipped as Ganapathi. In the same region near the

Krishna-Ganga river, at a place called 'Ganesh ghat' there is a 50 ft. high boulder which is worshipped. Stones and rocks bear close correspondence also to tradition of Shakti-worship.

The Ganapathyas who are the followers of the Ganapathi Gult, worship 'lingas', like the Shaivas in their daily ritual. They think that these 'lingas' which resemble the Jambu-fruit (rose apple) were originally worshipped by the attendants of Shiva or Shiva-ganas. In Jawa, Ganapathi is revered as 'Kalantaka', or the destroyer of time. Shiva too is famous as the destroyer of time or the vanquisher of the lord of death. Just as Shiva, Ganapathi too is considered in one of his forms (Heramba) to have five heads. This form viz., Heramba 'Ganapathi, rides on the lion and is depicted as having five heads and ten arms. Ganapathi in the form of Bhairava (Shiva) can be seen in Java and other places.

The followers of the Ganapathi cult did not last long, Even as the Shiva cult grew in strength the Ganapathi cult waned in popularity. The idea that Ganapathi is the supreme deity and Parabrahman found its expression in the 'Ganapthya tharvasheersha' and 'Ganesha purvottara-Upanishad'. This can be seen in the following hymn :

नमस्ते गणपतये त्वमेव प्रत्यक्षं ब्रह्मासि ।
त्वमेव केवलं कर्तासि ।.... धर्तासि ।
त्वमेव ग्वल्विदं ब्रह्मासि । त्वं साक्षादात्मासि
नित्यम् ।

As the Shaiva cult grew in its appeal Ganapathi became only the lord of 'Shivaganas' or attendants of Shiva. Further, even when Ganpathi was held to be the lord of the 'ganas' the attendants, the Puranas speak of the antagonism between Shiva and Ganesha. The story of Shiva cutting off the head of Ganapathi is too well-known to be reproduced here.

Another widely known myth emphasises the close relation between Gauri the spouse of Shiva and Ganapathi. It

is found in the 'Rudrasamhita' section of *Shiva Purana*. When Parvathi was preparing to go for her bath, she fashioned an image of Ganapathi from out of the dirt on her body smeared with oil and breathed life into it. She then set up Ganapathi as the door-keeper to watch so that no one came while she bathed. When Shiva unexpectedly returned home and rushed into the bathing apartment, the valiant Ganapathi obstructed him. Angered by this, Shiva not knowing who this man was, slew Ganapathi. On seeing this Gauri commanded her own force (ganas) to retaliate and avenge the death of her 'offspring'. A battle with the Shivaganas ensued. Eventually, however, Gauri and Shiva were reconciled and Shiva recreated Ganapathi, but with the head of an elephant substituted for the human head Ganapathi originally had.

According to the *Lingapurana* and *Skandapurana*, Ganapathi is the eldest son of Shiva and Parvathi, while Skanda (Kumara or Subrahmanya or Kartikeya) is the younger of the sons. But in the earlier references as also in the works of Kalidasa, Skanda is considered to be the only son of Shiva and Parvathi. Ganapathi is not mentioned in these accounts as their son.

There are many myths and legends concerning the unnatural and mysterious relationship between Gauri and Ganapathi. One of these deals with the marriage of Ganapathi. When he attained the age of marriage Parvathi wanted to arrange for his marrage. She suggested to him many eligible girls, but none among them was acceptable to Ganapathi, for he insisted on his bride perfectly resembling Parvathi in all respects. How could there be a bride resembling Parvathi the mother of the universe in all details? Thus Ganapathi had to remain unmarried for all time to come. There are also many stories about the association between Ganapathi and Kanyakumari, who is none other than a form the goddess Parvathi herself. The significance of these stories, however, cannot be easily understood.

CHAPTER IV

VINAYAKA-GANAPATHI

It is said that the worship of Ganesha came into vogue in the very beginning of the Christian era. But the early *Grihya-Sutras* and *Dharmasutras* do not mention the worship of Ganapathi. However, the *Gobhila Smriti* of the 1st century A.D. contained an injunction that worship of Ganadhipa, must precede all other rituals of worship. The *Baudhayana Sutras* say that Ganesha should be offered various kinds of cakes and sweet dishes. In the same work Ganapathi is also called 'Bhutanatha,' Hasthimukha and Vighneswara, meaning the lord of sprits, having elephant-head and being master of obstacles.

According to the *Yajnavalkya-Smriti* (dated the 3rd Century A.D.) Rudra and Brahma created four Vinayakas who were supposed to look after the attendants of gods or the *ganas*. Vinayaka, which term means leader or maker of specific commands, was the name that was used to denote Ganapathi from very early times. These *nayakas* or leaders are the malevolent forces in the..... 'Acharadhyaya', where as many as 281 Vinayakas have been enumerated. *Bhagavata-Purana* includes Vinayakas in the group which contains 'Dakinis,, 'Yathudhanas' 'Kushmandas' the Grahas which torment infants, Bhutas, Yakshas and Rakshas. There is a verse in *Harivamsa-Purana* which includes rakshasas, pisachas, bhutas and vinayakas in one and the same group. Thus the lord or leader of these evil forces was said to be Vinayaka-Ganapathi.

The four Vinayakas enumerated in the *Yajnavalkya-Smriti* are Mita, Sammita, Shalakatankata and Kushmandara japutra. These are supposed to be the four aspects of a single Vinayaka. This Vinayaka is said to be the son of Ambika and is said to place all sorts of obstacles for every

endeavour of the human beings. This *Smriti* also suggests various measures to placate the single Vinayaka as well as the four aspects of this Vinayaka. The *Manava Grihya-Sutras* speak of Shalakatankata, Kushmandarajaputra, Usmita and Devayajana, the four aspects of Vinayaka as the causes of destruction, difficulty, impediment, suffering, fear, nightmares and other ills.

A very interesting story is related is *Varaha-Purana*. On one ocassion, Shiva burst out into laughter due to some reason, and this laughter gave birth to Ganapathi. The boy who came out was so pleasing that Parvathi would not turn her eyes away from him. This angered Shiva, and out of jealousy he cursed Ganapathi to become ugly with a pot belly and an elephant's head. However, when he was later appeased, heap pointed this monstrous Ganapathi as the commander of his hordes of spirits or bhutaganas. He further ordained : "let all people, before embarking on any endeavour, propitiate Vinayaka. If they fail to do so, let misforture befall them." This then, is the reason for Ganapathi being named as Vighnaraja meaning one who is the lord of obstacles or cause of all obstacles.

A sligthly different account is given in *Skanda purana*. During the early part of the Kali-yuga, sinners, *mlechas* or foreigners, and wicked persons were all worshipping the *Jyothirlinga* of Somnath, and all of them were entering heaven. This occasioned great crowding and lack of space in heaven, and so the disturbed gods approached Parvathi and entreated her to do something in the matter. The compassionate Parvathi rubbed a part of her body and taking some oily substance thus created Vinayaka who was to descend to earth and make people filled with greed and lust. Ganapathi's job was, therefore, to prevent all people from entering heaven !

The legend of Ganapathi in Nepal and Tibet speaks of him as having the same nature. A scholar is said to have been doing penance on the banks of the river Baghamati in

Kathmandu in Nepal. But Ganesha was creating a lot of obstacles and putting impediments for the success of the penance. In desperation, the scholar called upon the deity 'Vignanthaka,' who assumed a bodily form and attacked Ganesha. There are in Nepal and Tibet many icons and sculptures depecting this attack on Ganapathi. In Tibet, they portray Mahakala and Bodhisattva–Manjushri as trampling up on Ganapathi. They also represent Ganapathi as lying down, trod upon by goddess called Aparajita also called Ganapathi-Samakranta, who is shown in a sitting posture with one foot placed upon the prostrate Ganapathi. In the Tantric text called 'sadhanamala' belonging to the Budhist tradition of Mahayana Ganapathi is the name used for the leaders of obstacles. In the *Va'ahapurana*, in one of the hymns on Ganapathi, the very first verse reads.

नमोऽस्तु ते विघ्नकर्त्रे

Amarakosha also refers to Ganapathi as Vighnaraja (the lord impediments).

विनायको विघ्नराजद्वैमातुरगणाधिपः

Ganapathi being the *bringer* of misery, it is no wonder that he is depicted in such a haphazard manner. Sampurnanand in his Hindi book 'Ganesh' has included drawings of Ganapathi as depicted during the time oft he smritis. The various stages of development of the form in which Ganapathi came to be shown can be seen there. There certainly, was an age when Ganapathi was considered, and also depicted, as a *bhetala* (ghoul), a *brahmarakshasa* (disembodied spirit) and a pisacha (ghost).

CHAPTER V

VINAYAKA THE SON OF GAURI

Vinayaka is better known as 'Gauri-putra' or son of Gauri than as 'Shivaputra' or son of Shiva. A study of the *puranas, Smrtis* and other traditional lore reveals that there is a closer relationship between Ganesha and Parvathi than between Ganesha and Shiva. That is why the worship of Ganapathi is performed along with the worship of Gauri. There is however no connection between the worship of Shiva during Shivaratri and Ganapati-puja. Worship of Ganapathi is thus a part of the rituals connected with Shakti-puja. The *smritis* reveal that worship of Ganapathi was performed on the occasion of *Matrika-puja* or the elaborate worship of mother goddesses which was being conducted even as early as in the I st century A.D.

The word 'Matr' referas to the 'mother of all creation'. Her characteristics and powers were considered as 'Matrikas'; and there was an old tradition of installing certain images to represent these characterstics and powers. The Puranas speak of a multitude of goddesses, whose several shaktis (forces) were all considered personified Matrikas. Thus, when Shiva destroyed the demon Andhakasura, the flame of fire which sprouted from Shiva's mouth gave birth to a goddess called Yogesvari-Shakti. On the same occasion, Brahma created Brahmani: Vishnu brought forth Vaishnavi: from Parvathi issued Chamunda: Indra was responsible for Indrani: Varaha created Varahi, Kaumari was born from Kumara, and Mahesvari issued from Mahesvara. These seven goddesses are termed the seven *shaktis* also called the seven Matrkas, the leader of whom however was Yogesvari.

The legend in *Mahabharata* that these seven Matrikas nursed the offspring of Shiva name Skanda is not a very ancient one. That is why there is no mention of the seven matrikas

in the worship of Subrahmanya. But *Harivamsa* contains a reference saying that the seven *matrikas* when worshipped give relief to infants who are sick, and also destroy the *grahas* which torment them. There also exists a tradition of worshipping the *mathrikas* for alleviating the diseases caused by Arbhaka-graha, which catches hold of children and troubles them.

Since ancient times, there has been a close connection between Ganesha and the seven matrikas. In all the temples of Shiva, images of Ganapathi can be found along with those of the *Matrikas*. There is in fact a rule that an image of Ganapathi should always accompany the images of the seven *Matrikas*. In all such temples Ganapathi is placed next to Chamunda who was the direct creation of Parvathi. Thus, ever since the times of the *smriti* texts the relationship between Gauri and Ganesha has been very close. Some texts go so far as to say that the seven *Matrikas* are in fact the seven Shaktis (forces) or Ganapathi.

CHAPTER VI

THE SHAKTHI OF GANAPATHI

During the worship of Ganapathi, we refer to him as 'Vatu' meaning a boy, initiated but not married, or Brahmachari. But in order to show that he has an inclination towards marriage, he is also spoken of as romantic or Sringari, and lustful or Kumuka. It is a detail of the tantrik tradition that every male deity has his appropriate female counter-part. Even as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva have Bharati, Lakshmi and Gauri respectively, Ganapathi too is depicted along with two female forces or (*shakti*) viz., Siddhi and Buddhi. Often, he is shown with only one female force (*shakhi*) seated on his left thigh. The Ganapathi who is thus accompanied by the female consorts or *shaktis* is spoken of as Mahaganapathi or Lakshmi-Ganapathi. In many of the Shiva temples of South India, we see images of Ganapathi called 'Ucchishta-Ganapathi' A female called 'Pushti' is seated on the left thigh of Ganapathi, in such way that his trunk is in contact with her private organ, and her right hand is touching the generative organ of Ganapathi. Such an image belongs obviously to the tantric cult which attaches an esoteric meaning to the depicted posture. There can also be found another kind of image of Ganapathi seated along with his female consort, with a pot of wine in his hand. This is called Pushkara-Ganapathi, also belonging to the tantric cult.

The two *shaktis,* viz Buddhi and Siddhi, are supposed to be the daughters of Brahma, Ganapathi is considered to have a son Lakshya (*goal or target*) by Siddhi, and another son named Labha (gain) by Buddhi. The activity which is responsible for success in any endevour is Siddhi. The expected goal or fruit, the result of the endeavour is Lakshya. The knowledge which precedes any endeavour is Buddhi and the

product of this is called Labha (gain). Ganapathi is also depicted with eight female deities surrounding him. These female deities are but the embodiments of the eight-fold achievements (*Ashta-Siddhi*) in yoga, which are named *Anima, Mahima, Garima, Laghima, Prapti, Prakamya, Ishitva and Vashitva.* There are other pieces of sculptures in India which represent Yogeshvari and the seven *Matrikas* as being the eight female deities sorrounding Ganapathi.

If the Shakti-Ganapathi is depicted alone without explicit representation of a consort, he is named Ganeshani who is actually the female counterpart of Ganapathi. There are not many such sculptures depicting Ganeshani. The most well-known one is perhaps in the Gauri-Shankara temple in Beraghathi near Jabalpur. This image has prominent breasts, a trunk, four arms, but no pot belly or weapons. In the pedastal below there is an image of a person which has an elelphant head and two arms, supporting Ganashani on his left hand. This image is probably that of the *ganas* or attendants spirts and is found in a temple which seems to be dedicated to the sixty-four Yoginis, and belongs to the 6th centuray A.D. In South India there is another image of Ganashani with the feet resembling the paws of a tiger. This is called Vyghrapada Ganeshani. Some Monasteries or temples in Tibet portray an image of Mahakala, whose one foot is placed on Ganesha, while the other rests on Ganeshani.

CHAPTER VII

VIDYA-GANAPATHI

Nowadays, Ganapathi is considered a deity who is concerned with learning. That is why he is duly worshipped prior to sending a child to the school for acquiring various skills. But no such conception of a close relationship between Ganapathi and learning can be found in the *Smritis*. It is not known how this idea developed in course of time, and became popular all over the country.

The Sanskrit alphabet was once known as Siddhi. This word is indicative of value and success. Some say that Patanjali refers to this word as authority. Whatever the meaning, there was at one time the custom of making the children recite 'Om Namah Siddhyai.'' before beginning their studies. In course of time however this changed to 'Onamasida'. It later became a tradition to begin any writing of importance or an inscription either with the word 'Siddham' or with the symbol representing that word. This word 'Siddham' or Svasti later materialised into what is called Ganapathi- yantra. This was also how the diagram called 'swastika' became closely connected with Ganapathi. Siddhi also began to be considered as being the wife (*shakti*) of Ganapathi.

The story of Ganapathi being the scribe of Vyasa which occurs in the *Mahabharata* is well-known. But reliable authorities hold that the 'Adi-parva' in which this story is found is an interpolation. They point out that the Balabharata composed by the Sanskrit poet Rajashekara during the 9th century A.D. was the original source for this story connected with Mahabharata. The traveller Al Beruni, who came to India around the 10th century had heard this legend; and it was he who was responsible for popularising this story. There is also a sculpture found in Cambodia which depicts Ganesha with one hand holding a pen and the other a book.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SVARUPA OF GANAPATHI

The *Ganesha purana* describes in detail the various forms which Ganapathi assumes:

ध्यायेत् सिंहगतं विनायकममुं दिग्बाहुमाद्ये युगे
त्रेतायां तु मयूरवाहनममुं षड्बाहुकं सिद्धिदम् ।
द्वापरे तु गजाननं युगभुजं रक्ताङ्गरागं विभुम्
तुर्ये तु द्विभुजं सितङ्गरुचिरं सर्वायुधं सर्वदा ॥

In Krita-Yuga, Ganapathi had ten arms, and his vehicle was a lion. In Treta-Yuga, he had six arms and a peacock was his vehicle. In Dvapara-Yuga, he had an elephant's face and four arms. In the last Yuga (viz Kali) he has two arms and the body has white complexion. During the Krita and Treta Yugas, he was called Vinayaka, whereas he is known as Gajanana in the Dvapara and Kali Yugas.

The detailed description of the 281 Vinayakas mentioned in the *Smritis* is not available to us. The description of four Vinayakas which have been discovered by Pandit Sampurnanand correlates to a large extent with the ancient images of Ganapathi. Since Vinayaka, the son of Ambika has now become popular, and festivals are being performed in his honour, many modifications in presenting him have naturally appeared. However, even today, the *dhyana-slokas* and the existing sculptures portray several forms like Lakshmi-Ganapathi, Bhuvanesha-Ganapathi, Heramba-Ganapathi' Pingala-Ganapathi, Urdhva-Ganapathi, Maha-Ganapathi, Haridra-Ganapathi, Arbhaka-Ganapathi, Ucchishta-Ganapathi, Surya-Ganapathi, Shakti-Ganapathi, Nrutya-Ganapathi, Svayambhu-Ganapathi, Varada-Ganapathi, Tushti-Ganapathi, Prasanna-Ganapathi, Ashta-Mahishi-Ganapathi and so on.

Images of Ganapathi with 2,4,6,8 and 10 arms can be found. Similarly, images of Ganapathi which are white, red or yellow in colour are described in several texts. The deity has also been depicted as having in his hands various articles such as noose, goad, rosary, trident, Akshamala (Crystal-beads), Vajra–weapon, cake or modaka, stick, Pomegranate fruit, book, bowl or vessel containing wine, snake, axe, Jambu-phala and so on.

In the posture known as *Maharaja-leela* Ganesha is shown in various aspects such as reclining, sitting in padmasana, and standing. The images showing Ganapathi as standing are said to be very ancient. There are also many sculptures of dancing Ganapathi. They will be dealt with later.

CHAPTER IX

ICONOGRAPHIC CONCEPTION

Scholars have different interpretations and theories regarding the form of Ganapathi and rituals connected with his worship. Some of them are as follows :-

1. Ganapathi is the god presiding over crops. He is the deity created by the peasant folk in the agricultural set-up.

2. According to the "Proceedings of All India Oriental Conference IX, 1937," agriculture is the main occupation in the rural life of India. The form of Ganapathi is symbolic of this major occupation and of the importance of harvests.

3. Shiva and Parvathi, the parents of Ganapathi are symbolic of the Sun and the Earth. The story of Parvathi's bathing, Siva's arrival, Ganapathi preventing him from entering, Shiva cutting off the head of Ganapathi, etc., narrated earlier are symbols of the following description of peasant's life :—

The Sun's absence and Parvathi's bathing are symbolic of the rainy season. When the Sun is covered by the clouds and the Earth gets bathed in the rain, crops grow out of the earth (i.e.,) Ganapathi, and stand between the Earth and the Sun. After the lapse of time, rains stop and the Sun comes out of the clouds. The crops are harvested (symbolising Ganapathi's head being cut off). The earth looks sad after the harvest of the crops. The yield is heaped up and the fruits enjoyed. This heap resembles a huge elephant. This yield is the cause of happiness. This is the story of Ganapathi's birth from out of the earth (dirt) of Parvathi's body. He is nothing but the symbol of crops coming out of the earth.

Ganapathi riding on the rat is symbolic of keeping the corn beyond the reach of rats, controlling or preventing the rats from eating away the corn. So the granary, the picota pot (stomach), the measuring vessel (*Kolaga*) (neck), the winnowing basket (his wide ears), the ploughs, the hay stick or the thrashing rod (weapon in his hand) : all these things used in agricultural life constitute the symbolic picture.

The following are the picturesque representation of Ganapathi from out of all these objects constituting agricultural life :

The Granary (big belly) has a base (Pitha) to keep it firm. The granary is closed with the measuring vessel (Kolaga). It looks like an elephant's head. The measuring vessel is held tight over the granary, without being covered into the belly of the granary, by two pieces of stick on the sides of the measuring vessel. These are the two tusks of Ganapathi. One stick is an old one ; another is prepared for the next year. The winnowing baskets are hung over the sides of the measuring vessel. These look like the ears of Ganapathi (Surpakarna the ears resembling winnowing baskets). When the picota pot is placed over the measuring vessel, its curved part looks like the trunk of the elephant. Any place with corns is necessarily infested by rats. The idea that the corn heap (Ganapathi) must be kept beyond the rats has given rise to the imagination of Ganapathi riding on the rat. In order to scare the rats away a snake is made to encircle the heap of grains. That is Ganapathi's belt tied round the belly. Thus the image of Ganapathi becomes complete and symbolic.

The idea that Ganapathi is basically a deity of the peasant folk is further evidenced by the following —

a) In the Indian month of Bhadrapada in the rainy season or Varsharuthu the image of Ganapathi is prepared out of clay or mud and duly worshipped.

b) His hands are beautified with sugar-cane, the ear of corn etc.

c) The idea that Ganapathi likes very much the Durva grass. To substantiate the above idea that Ganapathi is basically a deity of the peasants, scholars like Monier Williams and others quote the following verse in Sanskrit supposed to be that of Manu :—

विप्राणां दैवतं शम्भुः क्षत्रियाणां तु माधवः।
वैश्यानां तु भवेद्ब्रह्मा शूद्राणां गणनायकः॥

Sambhu is the deity of the priestly class or Brahmins : Madhava, that of the Warriors or Kshatriyas, Brahma that of the merchant folk, or vaisyas, and Gananayaka of the peasant labourers or *sudras*.

The logical basis of this argument is not found because the following cannot be negated outright on the basis of the above verse.

1. That Ganapathi has a place of importance among the Devaganas (group of deities) from very early times.
2. The traditional belief that Ganapathi is the *Adidevata* or the presiding deity of learning and fine arts (like music, dance etc.).
3. The Yogic concept that Ganapathi as the lord of the Muladhara Chakra in the human body.
4. He is being worshipped not only by peasants but by all, irrespective of caste or vocational distinctions, over centuries.

Though all these symbolic elements of the agricultural life are remotely attributed to be the source of the crystallization of Ganapathi's form, the above facts also provide valid reason for the fact that Ganapathi is not entirely a deity connected with the sudra or the peasant and his life on the farm.

Tantric Tradition-The source of Ganapathi Iconography :

The tantric tradition holds that the origin of Ganapathi iconography is the Tantric symbolism. Gods were worshipped

symbolically in the form of pictographs even before imagining them in the form of icons having divinity. Even today the Tantric tradition believes in worship of gods in the form of Trikona (Triangle), Shatkona (Hexagon), and a pattern of lines. Along with these symbols like the elements earth, water, air, fire and sky were also worshipped. Each of these elements was represented by a line or a symbol. It is learnt from Tantric works like *Sivachara-Chandrika, Kalaprakasa Tantra* and so on that these five elements were symbolically represented by Dirgha Chaturasra (oblong rectangle), Varthula (Circle), Trikona (triangle), Ardha Chandra (Semi circle), Dhwaja (Flag) etc.,

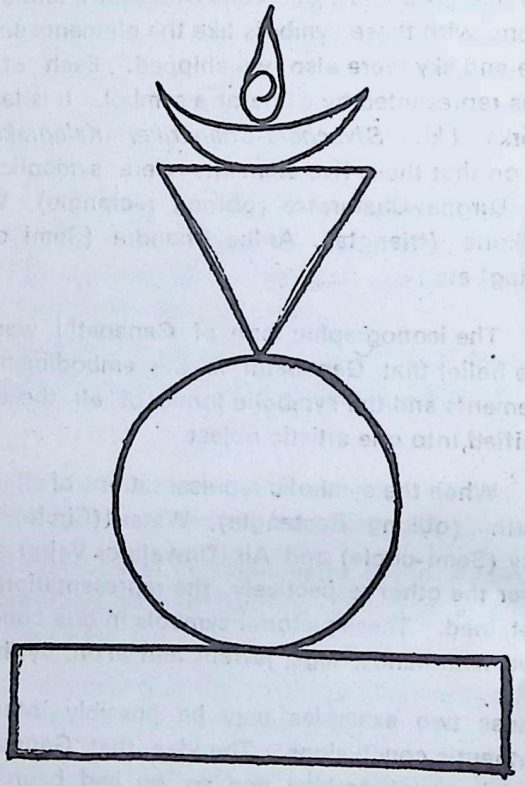
The iconographic form of Ganapathi was evolved when the belief that Ganapathi is the embodiment of all the five elements and the symbolic forms of all these elements were unified into one artistic object.

When the symbolic representations of all the five elements, Earth (oblong Rectangle), Water (Circle), Fire (Triangle), Sky (Semi-circle) and Air (Dhwaja or Vajra) are depicted one over the other respectively, the representation of Ganapathi is obtained. These pictorial symbols in due course were beautified with hands, legs, jewells and so on, by the artist sculptor.

These two examples may be possibly inferences, but not authentic conclusions. The idea that Ganapathi is elephant-faced son of Ambika and so on had been well-established by the time the complete iconographic conception of Ganapathi was evloved. Moreover the symbolic representations of Ganapathi worshipped by Tantric Traditionists are quite different; and they do not even remotely resemble the above visualisation.

As it has taken many centuries for the Rigvedic Ganapathi to transform himself into the puranic Vinayaka, so has it taken centuries for the Ganapathi to take the present beautiful form. *Ganeshapurana* and *Mudgalapurana* state that the form of Ganapathi differs from age to age. It is possible to

trace out the developments and changes in the imagination of the form of Ganapathi from the time when the worship of Ganapathi started in the Smriti Age down to our own day.



In the most ancient Smritis, Ganapathi is depicted as cruel evil-causing power. It may be inferred that Ganapathi was worshipped in the linga form at the beginning of the Puranic age. It is customary for the Ganapathi to be worshipped as Ganapathi Linga. Many round-shaped and oval-shaped stones and pebbles have been worshipped as Ganapathi, smearing them with red paint. For example 'Modakeswara Ganapathi' at Nasik and 'Swayambhu Ganapathi' at Varda seem to belong to that group of lingas. Many Ganapathi idols known as Chintamani Ganesha seem to be

nothing more than round stones (boulders) without any definite shape or form like face, neck, torso etc.

The next stage is the worship of Ganesa idols with an obvious elephantine face. Examples are 'Sarvajanika Ganapathi' at Junnar, 'Chintamani Ganapathi' at Thevur and 'Siddhi Vinayaka' at Siddhateka.

'Dwibhuja' or two-handed Ganapathi constitutes the next stage of evolution in Ganapathi iconography. Most remarkable examples of this type are to be found in Idagunji and Gokarna, both in Karnataka. This form of Ganapathi is depicted with a bald head, big belly like granary, and stocky body with very short legs. There is no additional ornamentation except the sacred thread or yajnopavita. The icon said to be in Vietnam is an example of this kind of iconic representation of Ganapathi. He has short stature, big belly, and a small dhoti worn around the waist; in the right hand he holds a stick, he has a bald head, and carries a vessel in his left hand; there is no sacred thread or Yajnopavita here. The facial expression is one of complacency. Amaravathi Ganapathi idol is supposed to be historically the most ancient one; it seems to be the earliest visualization in the evolution of Ganapathi iconography. This seems to be an example of the transformation of boulders and elephant figured stones into a more accomplished form at the hand of the sculptor. Though this figure is that of a male, there are no tusks.

In the South, in Tamilnadu no idols of Ganapathi have been discovered prior to Pallava period. Only idols of the Pallava period are available. The Pallava rulers are said to have introduced the worship and representation of Ganapathi into Tamilnadu. The Pallava period is assigned to the 3rd century A.D. These Pallava Ganapathi idols discovered do not have any extra ornamentation except a particular type of crown called Karandamakuta (head ornament).

Ornamenting Ganapathi probably started from the Chola period. It is also said that Ganapathi acquired a significant dlace in temple architecture only from this period onwards. Ganapathi who had a place usually only on the wall, south of the sanctum–sanctorum, began to acquire a significant and separate place in the temples.

By the days of the Hoysalas, Ganapathi iconography witnessed remarkable change; and the development with beautiful ornaments like the Crown with a smiling and attractive face made the deity more popular.

CHAPTER X

VARIETIES OF IMAGES

Attribution of a variety of names, emblems to gods and there by attributing special powers is the salient feature of Hindu theism. Krishna is an example. He is one god but there are many varieties like Balakrishna, Kalingakrishna, Parthasarathi and so on. The same is the case with many other deities, Ganapathi varieties are more in number than any other deity. In fact, the real number of these varieties known as *prabhedas* is not yet definitely ascertained. Based on the iconography, Agama, Tantra, Mantra Sastra, Puranas and the available Ganapathi idols in temples, Sri. C. B. Sitaram has made a collection of about ninetyone Ganapathis (53 different Ganapathis with four hands, 14 different kinds of Ganapathis with six hands ; 14 different kinds of Ganapathis with ten hands ; four different kinds of Ganapathis with twelve hands ; etc.) Dr. Gururaja Bhat is of the opinion that the different idols of Ganapathi developed long before the definite features of Ganapathis were clearly evolved in the iconographic text called Silpasastras (History and culture of the Tuluvas).

On the basis of the posture of the trunk, Ganapathi idols have been differentiated into twelve groups. They are :—

1. Samabhanga (normal posture) without head-ornaments, having only two arms. These seem to be the earliest specimens in the field of Ganapathi iconography.
2. Subhanga (easy posture), with some head-ornaments and with two or four hands.
3. A few idols belonging to the period between the 9th and 12th centuries A.D., with two hands and numerous and elaborate head ornaments
4. Two handed Ganapathis, in sitting posture, without head ornaments.

5. Chaturbuja Ganapathi (four handed) without ornamentation and the arch of flames called prabhavali.
6. Ganapathi with four hands and a crown on the head in the shape of a measuring vessel Kolaga or Conch-shaped (Karanda).
7. Ganapathi idol of the Hoysala period richly and delicately ornamented.
8. Idols, belonging to 14th to 18th Centuries A.D. with traditional ornamentation and with *Nagabandha* (snake-ornament), vehicle (Vahana) and crown in the shape of Karanda Makuta.
9. Ganapathi with four hands, *Jata-Makuta* (Crown-like coiled matted hair) and girdle-like belt round the belly etc., with slender *Prabhavali* (arch of flames).
10. Tribhanga (with three bends) standing posture, known as 'sthanaka'.
11. Reliefs (carved on stone slabs).
12. Dancing Ganapathi (Nritya Ganapathis).

As many as 21 or 32 Ganapathis are described in the various Agamas. *Sarada-Tilaka-Tantra* refers to ten different kinds of Ganapathi all associated with Sakti or female consorts.

Sri. T.A. Gopinatha Rao in his *Elements of Hindu Iconography* has collected about *21 Dhyanaslokas* of 21 different kinds of Ganapathi. *Sri Vidyarnava-Tantra* gives 15 different kinds of Ganapathis. On the rampart of Nanjangud temple 32 different Ganapathis are depicted. It is considered as the only example where so many Ganapathis are depicted in one single temple. It may be noted that *Sri-Tatvanidhi'*, considered to have been composed by Krishnaraja Wodeyar III (1811-1831) refers to 32 Ganapathis. The names of most of these resemble the ones at Nanjangud Temple.

The 32 Ganapathis according to *Mudgalapurana* are as follows :

1. Bala Ganapathi
2. Tharuna Ganapathi
3. Bhakthi Ganapathi
4. Vira Ganapathi
5. Sakthi Ganapathi
6. Dwija Ganapathi
7. Siddhi Ganapathi
8. Ucchishta Ganapathi
9. Vighna Ganapathi
10. Kshipra Ganapathi
11. Heramba Ganapathi
12. Lakshmi Ganapathi
13. Maha Ganapathi
14. Vijaya Ganapathi
15. Nritya Ganapathi
16. Urddhva Ganapathi
17. Ekakshara Ganapathi
18. Vira Ganapathi
19. Tryakshara Ganapathi
20. Kshipraprasada Ganapathi
21. Haridra Ganapathi
22. Ekadanta Ganapathi
23. Srishti Ganapathi
24. Uddanda Ganapathi
25. Rina-Vimochana Ganapathi
26. Dundhi Ganapathi
27. Dvimukha Ganapathi
28. Trimuka Ganapathi
29. Simha Ganapathi
30. Yoga Ganapathi
31. Durga Ganapathi
32. Samkashtahara Ganapathi

The first sixten among them, known as 'Shodasha Ganapathis', are supposed to be very powerful, and are frequently worshipped. According to the *Mysore Archaelogical Survey Report* of 1940 the names of only fifteen out of the 32 Ganapathis in Nanjangud Temple concur. The rest differ.

The fifteen kinds of Ganapathis according to *Sri-Vidyarnava-Tantra* are :

1. Ekakshara Ganapathi
2. Maha Ganapathi
3. Vakratunda Ganapathi
4. Lakshmi Ganapathi
5. Heramba Ganapothi
6. Veera Ganapathi
7. Lakshmi Ganapathi
8. Sakthi Ganapathi
9. Subrahmanya Ganapathi
10. Maha Ganapathi
11. Trailokya Mohana Ganapathi
12. Haridra Ganapathi
13. Vakrathunda Ganapathi
14. Ucchishta Ganapathi
15. Kshipra Ganapathi

Among the Ganapathis of this list, there are two kinds of Maha Ganapathis and three different features among the second kind of Maha-Ganapathi. There are two Vakrathunda and two Lakshmi-Ganapathis. Also two different features (lakshanas) of Vira-Ganapathis, five different features of Sakti-Ganapathis, two of Trailokya-Mohana-Ganapathis and two of Ucchista-Ganapathis are described.

The 21 kinds of Ganapathis collected by Sri. T. A. Gopinatha Rao on the basis of iconography and Agamas are as follows :—

1. Vinayaka
2. Bija Ganapathi
3. Heramba Ganapathi
4. Vakrathunda Ganapathi
5. Bala Ganapathi
6. Taruna Ganapathi
7. Bhakti Vighnesa
8. Vira Vighnesa
9. Sakti Ganesa
10. Dwija-Ganapathi
11. Pingala Ganapathi.
12. Ucchishta Ganapathi
13. Vighnaraja Ganapathi
14. Lakshmi Ganesha
15. Maha Ganesha
16. Bhuvanesa Ganapathi
17. Nritya Ganapathi
18. Urdhva Ganapathi
19. Prasanna Ganapathi
20. Unmatta Vinayaka
21. Hari Ganesha

The important features of some of the popular Ganapathis are :

1. VINAYAKA

As described earlier, he is called Vinayaka since he was born without a Creator or Nayaka, i. e., Siva. Sri. T. A. Gopinatha Rao in his *Elements of Hind Iconography* describes seven features of Vinayaka. Some of them are :

1. He is to be depicted with four hands. In the two hands on the right are the piece of his broken tusk and goad or Ankusa (elephant driver's hook). In the two hands on the left, wood-apple or Pasa (nose) or Naga (snake) or Akshamala (rosary of crystal beads).

In the trunk he has the Kadabu (pudding), porridge (or cake). He is depicted as in Samabhanga (normal posture) or in *Kutikasana* posture (slightly bent).

2. In one of the hands on the right he has the tusk and in another he has the *parasu* (axe). In the two hands on the left, in one he has the delicacy known as Laddu and in another rosary or *akshamala*. He has three eyes. He is to be depicted in *Padmapitha* pedestal or on the rat in sitting posture.

3. The features of Vinayaka associated with Sakti are as follows :-

On his left thigh is seated 'Sakti in nudity. She is called Vighneswari. She is adorned beautifully and has noose or *pasa* in her left hand In her right hand, she touches the *guhyanga* or the private part of Vinayaka. He has four hands and three eyes. In the two hands on the right he has pasa (noose) and ankusa (goad). On the left, in one hand he has ikshu or stalk of sugar-cane ; and with the other hand he touches the private part or guhya of his female consort.

2. BIJA GANAPATHI

This Ganapathi is referred to as 'Bijapura Ganapathi' in *Sri Vidyarnava Tantra.* He has ten hands. In the hands on the right side he has (from above) discus or *Chakra*, trident or *trisula*, sugar-cane stalk or *ikshu*, mace or gada, and ruits full of seeds. In the hands on the left side he has conch or Sankha, noose or *pasa*, utpala flower, corn and the broken tusk. He is purple in colour and seated in Padmasana.

3. HERAMBA GANAPATHI

He has five faces, ten hands, three eyes, and is seated on lion or *Simhasana*. In the hands on the right he shows abhaya or gesture of protection and has parasu (axe), danda (stick), ankusa (goad or hook) and varada-hastha (boon giving) ; and on the left side *padma* (lotus), arrow, *akshamala* (rosary), *pasa* (noose) and gada (mace).

In *Sri Vidyarnava-Tantra* it is said that he has in the same (above) order in the hands on the right side the skull (kapala), a weapon called *Mudgara*, rosary (akshamala), goad (ankusa) and seedy fruits ; and in the hands on the left side lotus, modaka (boluce), tusk, abhaya (protection) and varada (boon giving) postures.

Two more features of 'Heramba Ganapathi' are described in *Bharatiya Vidya* (Vol. XIII 1952) by Sri. C. B. Sitaram on the basis of the idols at Nagapattanam and Orissa.

4. VAKRATHUNDA GANAPATHI

He has four hands. In the two upper hands he holds pasa (noose) and ankusa (goad) and in the two lower hands shows varada (boon giving) and abhaya (protection). He is seated on red lotus.

5. BALA GANAPATHI

According to Yamala-Tantra, he is purple in complexion, seated on Parvathi's lap and ornamented with jewels. In his hands he has Nilakamala (blue water lily), drinking vessel, Pasa (noose) and Florals (kalpalatha). It is said that he must be visualised in this form. He has six hands. In the three hands on the right (from the top) he has *Jambu* fruit, Amra (mango) and kadali (plantains). In the three hands on the left (from the top) he has sugar-cane stalk (ikshu) and kadubu (cake). He is said to have one more hand known as Ooruhastha.

6. TARUNA GANAPATHI

He is purple in complexion and has six hands. In the hands on the right side he has noose or pasa, goad or ankusa, cake or modaka ; and in the hands on the left, goad or Ankusa, Jambuphala and sugar-cane stalk (ikshu).

7. BHAKTI-GANAPATHI (VIGHNESA)

He has four hands. He is white in complexion. He has mango, coconut, plantain and vessel containing sweet pudding (payasa) in his hands.

8. VIRA-VIGHNESA

There are three kinds of Vira-Vighnesas. In one kind he holds a golden vessel in his trunk. The female consort or Sakti is seated on his lap; and he embraces her by one of his hands. In the other three hands he has goad or *ankusa*, noose or pasa and shows abhaya-hastha (gesture of protection).

Another kind of Vira Vighnesa according to Vidyarnava-tantra has ten hands. In the five hands on the right side he has rosary or akshamala, discus or chakra, bow or chapa mace or gada and Trident or trisula. In the five hands on the left side he has tanka (hoe), arrow, tusk, and diamonds.

The third kind of Vira-Ganapathi is described in Yamala-tantra. He has twelve hands. In the six hands on the right side he has khadga or sword, discus or chakra, bow or chapa, arrow or bana, and a weapon called shakti; and Bethala spirit is by his side. In the six hands on the left, he has khatvanga (club), mudgara (a weapon), nagapasa (snake), trisula (trident) and kutaparasu (an axe).

9. SHAKTI-GANAPATHI

There are various references to many kinds of 'Sakti-Ganapathis' in Tantragamas. Lakshmi-ganapathi, Ucchishta-ganapathi, Maha-ganapathi, Urddhva-ganapathi, Pingala-ganapathi, etc., belong to this group.

There are vivid descriptions of 'Sakti-ganapathi' with four hands and with ten hands in Sarada-Tilaka, Sri Vidyarnava, Mantramharnava and Yamalatantra. Some of them are :

i) Sakti Ganapathi with four hands holding noose or pasa, goad or ankusa, tusk or danta and seedful fruit or pomegranate (bijapura phala) and holding sweet cake or Modaka in the trunk.

ii) Ganapathi having noose or pasa, rosary or akshamala, tusk or danta, and goad or ankusa is the second kind of Ganapathi.

iii) Ganapathi having noose or pasa, goad or ankusa, Florals (Creepers), Vishanas (horns) and having seedy fruits in the trunk is the third kind of Ganapathi.

iv) Ganapathi having noose or pasa and goad or ankusa in the hands on the right side : and on the left side embracing Pushti by one of the hands, holding in another seedy fruits, and balancing on the trunk cake or modaka, is the fourth kind of Sakti-Ganapathi.

Another is ten-handed Sakti-Ganapathi. He has five faces and is seated on a lion or simhasana like Heramba-Ganapathi. In the five hands on the right (from the top) he has trident (trisula), rosary (akshamala). skull and sweet cake (modaka), and another hand shows the attitude of protection (abhaya). In the five hands on the left he has (from the top) goad or ankusa, club or mudgara, magical stick called tanka, tusk, and shows boon-giving hand or *Varada* hastha.

10. DHWAJA-GANAPATHI

He is white in complexion, and has four hands. In the two hands on the right he has book or pusthaka and rosary or akshamala. On the hands on the left he has stick or danda and a pot of water or kamandala.

11. PINGALA-GANAPATHI

He is purple in complexion, and has six hands. In the three hands on the right side he has from the top sugar-cane stalk (ikshu), bunch of flowers (pushpa-manjari) and lotus. In

the three hands on the left he has a stick (danda), cake (modaka), and axe (parasu).

12. UCCHISHTA-GANAPATHI

This kind of Ganapathi is worshipped more especially by the left handed-sect of Ganapathyas. There are various kinds of Ucchishta-Ganapthis. They are :—

i) **Ucchishta Ganapathi with four hands :** He is nude and his female consort (Sakti) in nudity is seated on his lap. The two are visualised as touching the guhyanga or the private part of each other. He embraces Sakti and has in his hands noose (pasa), goad (Ankusha), vessel of ambrosia (Modapatra), tusk or bow (chapa), Arrow (bana), goad (ankusa) or pasa, or sugar cane stalk (ikshu). In another hand he is imagined as touching the private part of his consort (sakti).

ii) **Ucchistha Ganapathi with six hands :** He has in his hands on the right side musical instrument Veena, seedy fruit, lily (utpala) ; and in the three hands out of the five hands on the left he has the spike of paddy corn, rosary (akshamala) and lotus.

According to Uttaramnaya, he has noose (pasa), goad (ankusa), pot of nectar (Modakapatra) and tusk. He looks furious and is seated on the lotus. This form of Ganapathi is made to the size of the thumb from out of the *arka* root *(Calotropis)*. He is also known as "Arka-Ganapathi".

13. VIGHNARAJA-GANAPATHI

He has four hands, holds noose (pasa). goad (ankusa), Mango fruit (amra), and bears the hand of protection (Abhaya-hastha). In some cases there may be a discus or *Chakra* instead of the Mango.

Yamala-Tantra describes Vighnaraja-Ganapathi with twelve hands. In the six hands on the right he has, respectively, noose or pasa, axe or parasu, lotus or padma, bow or chapa, ikshu or sugar-cane stalk, and conch or shankha. In the six hands on the left side he has discus or *chakra*, spike of corn, goad or ankusa, bunch of flowers or pushpamanjari and an arrow or bana.

14. LAKSHMI-GANAPATHI

i) He has four hands. In the two hands on the right he has conch or shankha, discus or chakra, and in the two hands on the left he has mace or gada and the gesture of protection or abhaya, and is associated with the eight accomplishments (ashatasiddhis).

ii) He holds conch (sankha) and discus (chakra) in the two hands on the right, and by one of the hands on the left embraces the female consort called Lakshmi (Sakti); in another hand he holds the tusk and in the trunk he has the *hemakumbha* or the golden pot containing the nectar.

iii) Alternately in the two hands on the right, he has discus or chakra and tusk or danta, and by one of the left hands he embraces his spouse or Sakti and bears the gesture of protection (abhayahastha) in another.

This Ganapathi is white in complexion. Lakshmi-Ganapathi with eight hands is golden in colour. In the four hands on the right, he has Ratnakumbha (jewelled pot), padma (lotus flower), dadima (pomegranate) and bana (arrow). In the four hands on the left, he has goad (ankusha), noose (Pasa), Floral and arrow.

15. MAHA-GANAPATHI

i) As described in Sri–Vidyarnava-Tantra he is seated In the triangle (trikona) in the Lotus having six petals, on the jewel-studded throne under the Parijatha tree in the

diamond island (ratna-dvipa) in the middle of the ocean of Sugar-cane juice (ikshu-sagara). He has ten hands and three eyes. In the five hands on the right side he has, respectively (from the top) discus or chakra, trident or trisula, sugar cane stalk, bone, mace or gada, seedy fruits; and in the five hands on the left he has (in the same order) conch, goad, red lotus, spike of paddy corn, and broken tusk. He is depicted either as showering diamonds and jewel from the trunk, or embracing his female consort (Sakti) with the trunk as described in Sri Vidayarnava-Tantra.

ii) Apart from this, Lakshmi-Ganapathi with two other features is also described under this head. Here, there is not much of difference except a change in the emblems in his hands.

Mahaganapathi is worshipped as envisaged in the Tantra Sastras for the fulfilment of ambitions. Ganapathi is visualised in various colours according to the ritual and the ambition to be fulfilled. It is also mentioned that Mahaganapathi is invoked for entrapping elephants.

Sarada-tilaka-Tantra describes a form of Maha-Ganapathi with twelve arms.

16. BHUVANESA-GANAPATHI

He has eight hands. In the four hands on the right side, he has flower, arrow, bow, sugar cane stalk or conch. In the hands on the left, he has the tusk, noose, goad, and spike of paddy-corn. His physical attire is golden.

17. NRUTTA-GANAPATHI

The Nrutta-Ganapathi idol is the most attractive among all the idols of Ganapathi. He is depicted with a huge elephant's head having only one tusk or with raised trunk, huge protruding belly, hands holding noose (pasa) goad (ankusa), gesture of protection (Abayahastha) etc. The legs appear to be relatively small for the body; there is a serpent girdle around

the waist; jewelled ornaments are all over the body, and a crown lies on his head.

Sankara-samhita says, that once Brahma worshipped Ganapathi with devotion, whereupon Ganapathi began to dance in glee.

Nrutta-Ganapathi has six or eight hands. Nrutta-Ganapathi with eight hands has in his four hands on the right the gesture of protection or Abhaya, axe or parasu, and rosary or akshamala. In one of the four hands on the left side he bears the stick or danda. In the rest of the hands, he has a lotus flower, cake or modaka and sarpa or serpent. He is of golden complexion. The left leg is slightly bent towards the right leg up to the knee, and the right leg is slightly raised in the dancing posture. There are some idols also depicting Ganapathi as dancing over the back of the rat. But these are rare.

18. URDHVA GANAPATHI

He is golden in complexion. He has eight hands, and is shown as embracing his female consort (Sakti) with one of the hands on the left. In the hands on the right side he has the sugar cane stalk, lotus flower, spike of paddy-corn and the lily or utpala. In the three hands on the left he has bow or chapa, arrow or bana, and tusk or danta.

19. PRASANNA-GANAPATHI

He has four hands. He is regarded as the dispeller of all sorrows. In the two upper hands he has noose or pasa and goad or ankusa, and in the two lower hands he shows the act of protection (Abhaya) and boon bestowal (Varada). This Ganapathi is usually with a cheerful face, is beautified with jewels in the shape of serpents.

20. UNMATTA GANAPATHI

He has four hands, and is seated on a lotus. He is also called as "Unmatta-Ucchishta-Ganapathi." His emblems are

noose or pasa, goad or ankusa, bowl of cakes or Modakapatra and tusk or danta.

21. HARIDRA GANAPATHI

There are two kinds of Haridra-Ganapathis. In both the kinds he is yellow in complexion, like the turmeric root (haridra). He is seated on a golden throne. He is dressed in the same turmeric (yellow) coloured cloth. He is depicted in form as having four hands, and in another form he is shown as having six hands. These are the two kinds :

1. **Four handed Haridra Ganapathi ;** He has goad or ankusa, noose or pasa, axe or parasu, with the lower right hand he shows the tarjani-mudra (aspect of warning) or having noose or gada or ankusa, and signs of varada, (boon bestowing and abhaya (protection). As described in Mudgala-purana he has noose or pasa, goad or Ankusa, cake or Modaka and tusk or danta.

2. **Six handed Haridra-Ganapathi :** He has in the three hands on the right cake or Modaka, goad, ankusa, and noose or pasa : and in the three hands on the left the tusk and the gestures of protection (abhaya) and boon - bestowing (Varada). According to Srividyarnava he shows anger or Krodha - Mudra instead of boon-bestowal or Varadahastha. Some hold that in case of worshipping Haridra-Ganapathi for fulfilment of desires and ambitions the idol should be made out of the tip of turmeric root.

22. VARASIDDHI-VINAYAKA

This Ganapathi is popularly worshipped on Bhadrapada Sukla Chauti. He has four hands. In two of the hands, he has noose or pasa and goad or ankusa, and in two other hands he shows boon bestowal or Varada and protection or abhaya. He wears the serpent sacred thread or sarpa, yajnopavita. He has rat for his vehicle. The speciality of this Ganapathi is that he is described as a bachelor.

23. SAMKASHTAHARA GANAPATHI

He has four hands. One of the hands bears the mark of boon-bestowal or Varada; other three hands bear goad or Ankusa, noose or pasa and bowl of milk pudding or payasa-patra. Generally those who worship this form of Ganapathi put a metallic idol into the sacred pot or kalasa, and offer puja to the kalasa.

24. DWIBHUJA-GANAPATHI

This form of two-handed Ganapathi is important among the different forms of Ganapathi not referred to in the Agamas or iconography. Ganesapurana says that in the present age or Kaliyuga, Ganesa appears with two hands.

Yet such idols are very rare. Scholars are of opinion that this form of Ganapathi must be very ancient. Some hold that even before the establishment of the Ganapatya cult and the evolution of Ganapathi as the supreme power, these idols must have been there to receive worship. In Cambodia, Java and Bali, which were once Indian colonies, and also in China, Japan and Ceylon, the availability of such Dvibhuja-Ganapathi is common and marked, hence we can infer that the Buddhists visualised Ganapathi with two hands when they adopted Ganapathi into their pantheon of gods. Dvibhuja - Ganapathi belonging to the 5th Century A.D., and found with the chain of bells at Bhumar, is supposed to be the earliest specimen of this form.

Dvibhuja-Ganapathi is found in Karnataka in places like Gokarna, Idagunji, and in the temples on the hill at Jattangi-Rameswara in Chitradurga district. There is also a Dvibhuja-Ganapathi at Pilliyar-patti in Tamil Nadu. In Andhra Pradesh, such Ganapathis are found in one or two places. There are a few specimens preserved in the Madras Museum.

The one which was found in Vietnam is quite an interesting specimen. He stands with a stick in his right hand. He has no elaborate ornamentation. This idol is supposed to be very rare.

25. GAJANANA

He is one among the deities usually installed at the first rampart (prakara) in Vaishnava temples, for he is regarded as devotee of Vishnu. Gajanana who is always uttering "Narayana-Ashtakshari Mantra" holds in his hands conch or sankha, discus or chakra, and mace or gada. Padma-Samhita says that the devotee must also visualise him with axe or parasu, noose or pasa and goad or ankusa.

He is considered as possessing Narayana's features, and is said to be ordained by Narayana to remove the hindrances that may occur during the performance of sacrifice (Yagas) and other rituals.

In the Sri-vaishnava tradition 'Vishvaksena' is invoked instead of Ganapathi at the beginning of all rituals. He is considered as 'Vishnu - Ganapathi'. He is not Gajamukha (viz having elephant's head) but has a big belly like Ganapathi.

26. BALAMURI-GANAPATHI

Except in the case of Nrutta-Ganapathi, it is usual for the trunk of the deity to be bent towards the left side. In the case of Nrutta-Ganapathi, the trunk is either bent towards the right or it hangs straight. In the case of Haridra-Ganapathi and Unmatta-Ganapathi also, the trunk is turned towards the right. Such Ganapathis are also called as 'Balamuri-Ganapathi' (trunk bent towards the right). He is also known as "Sara-Ganapathi" or 'Kamya Ganapathi'.

Those who wish to get their desires fulfilled immediately make such Balamuri-Ganapathis, worship him and instead of dismissing him, put him into boxes or on shelves. After the fulfilment of the ambitions he is drowned in water after due worship (puja). It is believed that such Balamuri-Ganapathis yield immediate results.

27. ARKA-GANAPATHI

Tantra traditionalists worship Arka-Ganapathi. According to Sri Vidyarnava-Tantra, Ucchishta–Ganapathi form must be made out of the 'Arka' root to the size of the thumb. He has four hands and three eyes. He is depicted as seated on the lotus, or as associated with his female consort (Sakti). It is believed that the oldest 'Arka' roots get transformed into the form of Ganapathi of some kind, and that such ones are obtained very rarely. Arka–Ganapathi fulfils the desires of devotees at once. It is also believed that people following the Tantric traditions obtain the fulfilment of six magical rites or Shatkriyas.

As Ganapathi worship became popular, Ganapathi's iconography also attained variety and artistic excellence, Following 'Navanita-Gopala', the Bala-Ganapathi idol depicting Ganapathi toddling as a child has been evolved. Such a one is carved on the pillar of the Jalagandeswara temple at Vellore.

There are many Nrutta-Ganapathi idols. Probably the musician's imagination of Ganapathi must have got its inspiration from there. There is a relief on the wall of Mallikarjuna temple at Srisailam. He is in dvibhangi (double bend) posture, having four hands. He plays on the flute, as Krishna does.

Another scene is depicted on the walls of the same temple. Here Ganapathi is depicted in the same posture. Hanuman is seen in a merry mood in front of him. It is a very beautiful and rare depiction.

There are many Ganapathi reliefs on the walls of the Seebi temple in Tumkur District. These are made in mortar. Among them, the ones on the walls of the northern rampart (prakara) are very rare. One of the forms of Ganapathi depicted here is seated in the lotus posture (padmasana) playing on the Veena.

Nude Ganapathi idols and Urdvamedhra-Ganapathi idols with erected private organs are not very rare in Siva temples. There are many such Ganapathi idols on the outer rampart of Nanjangud temple. These, if taken in proper perspective, only mean that the artist or the devotee who visualised these, only considered sex as a part of his artistic creation, or natural urge as in the case of the ancient civilizations where anthropomorphic ideas were applied in visualising or worshipping that deity. In the case of ancient civilizations also, we find that they attributed all aspects of human life to the gods which they worshipped. Siva as 'Bhikshatanamurthi' is depicted only in nude form. Some of the Ucchishta-Ganapathi idols are nudely depicted. But Urdhvamedhra-Ganapathi at Udayagiri (M.P.) resembles the idols belonging to the Lakulisa sect or Saivites.

There is a Ganapathi idol with twelve hands at Rajapur in Madhya Pradesh. The idol is carved in black stone. He is depicted in the dancing posture. It is a rare depiction.

There is rare creation of three gods in one idol. It is Ganapathi having Hanuman's face as his right ear and Garuda's face as his left ear. He is depicted as god in animal form associated in one idol. It is found in the Kolarama temple at Kolar (Karnataka). This idol of three feet in height is considered as belonging to the period of the Cholas. He is called as 'Hanuma-Garuda-Ganapathi'.

28. GANESHANI-VINAYAKA

Idols of elephant-faced female deities are called as Ganesani. As *Visnu-dharmottara purana* observes, Shiva created the 'Matriganas' for slaying Andhakasura. One among them is 'Vinayaki'. Apart from these, other female attendants or ganas were also created ; Surpakarni, Lambamekhala, etc. It is considered that the female elephant-faced idols are the same as 'Ganesani.'

There is a mutilated Ganesani idol in the Gowrishankara Temple as Bheraghat near Jabbalpur. All the four hands of this elephant faced female deity are broken, and the emblems borne are not to be known. The deity is seated with one leg folded and another stretching down. Beneath the seat there is an elephant-faced figure with two-hands. Probably this may be one of the attendant ganas.

There is yet another Ganeshani idol with a special feature. It is found at Mandassore in M.P. The special feature of this Ganeshani is that the trunk is turned towards the right. Also at Gwalior and Khajuraho Ganeshani idols have been discovered.

Another Ganeshani idol is to be found in the pillar of the Champakarama Mantapa at Suchindram near Kanyakumari. She is seated in 'Sukhasana or easy posture and has four hands. In the two upper hands she bears noose or pasa and goad or ankusa, and in the two lower hands the gesture of protection or Abhaya and boon-bestowal or Varada. It is considered that this idol resembles the one at Bheraghat.

There is a Ganeshani at the entrance of Sundareshwar-Temple in Madurai. This differs from the other ones mentioned above. This Ganeshani has an elephant's head, two hands, female body, legs of a tiger from below the waist, and a tail. This deity is called as Vyaghrapada-Ganeshani' (tiger-footed Ganeshani). This idol with a lotus in one hand is a rare sculpture. It is said that in Tibet there is a Ganeshani idol, which perhaps is the only one outside India. This Ganeshani or Vinayaki is not Ganesha's consort. It is only a female form of Ganesha.

CHAPTER XI

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GANAPATHI

The form, colour, emblem, vehicle, etc., of Ganapathi are all of symbolic significance. He is popular deity worshipped by one and all. Yogis worship him as 'Parabrahma'; musicians and dancers as the teacher of the art and the source of music. Those bent upon amassing knowledge offer prayers to him as 'Vidya-Ganapathi'. The layman looks upon him as the redeemer of sorrows. The various forms of Vidya Ganapathi, Vatapi-Ganapathi, Ucchishta-Ganapathi etc., are said to be closely connected with music and dance.

1. PRITHVI TATVA :—(Principle of the Earth)

Yogic texts hold Maha-Ganapathi as the lord of Muladhara center in the body. According to Yoga-sastra, human body consists of six centres known as 'Shatchakras'. Muladhara indicates the basic stage, and represents the principle of earth. The 'Parabrahma' can be realised only if the psychic energy called 'Kundalini' rises up from the Muladhara, and reaches the Sahasrara. Ganapathi is considered as 'Parabrahma-swarupa'. Ganapathi is considered as the presiding deity of prithvi-tatva. Prithvi and Muladhara are represented by 'Dirgha - Chaturasra' form. When the Kundalini attains "Vatahata" or struck by wind it becomes 'Vatapi'. Hence the name 'Vatapi-Ganapathi'.

Ganapathi is also represented as seated on the diagram known as 'Swastika'. The 'Swastika' like the square has four angles. According to 'Shatchakranirupana', the chakra that has four angles is recognised as Muladhara. Ganapathi is also pictured iconographically as seated on 'Swastikasana'. This can be interpreted in terms of both gross or 'sthua' and subtle or 'Sukshma' meanings.

Basically Ganapathi is described in the Puranas as the creation of Parvathi (earth) from out of the earth or the dirt from out of her body.

The description given earlier about Ganapathi symbolising agricultuaral life also indicates the relationship between Ganapathi and the earth.

In Ganapathi worship and ritual connected with it or the idol made out of clay or mud is considered more auspicious and more powerful than even a golden idol, and it is the most popular form in which this deity is worshipped by the people.

Vakratunda-Ganapathi made out of mud is regarded as the sacred 'pranava' or the form of 'Omkara'. Hence Ganapathi is indicated by 'OM' in Tamil and Telugu scripts. It is, in Tamil called as 'Pilliyar-Suzi'i.e., Ganapathi-circle.

Patanjali's Yogasutra describes him as the source of the sound 'OM'. This sound of 'OM' is recognised in other religions also. Christians call it as 'AMEN'. They hold that God created only the sound 'Amen' first of all.

2. SINDURA-VARNA AND SINDURA-TILAKA : (Red Colour)

The colour of Muladhara is red or blood colour, (rakta-varna). Ganapathi is associated with this colour. A dhyana-sloka describes him as follows :

"Raktha-Varnam,
Raktha-Malyambaram
Raktha-gandhanuliptangam
Raktha-pushpais supujitam"

The petals of Muladhara-chakra are supposed to be red in colour. Hence red is considered as the favourite colour of Ganapathi. He is red in complextion, wears red dress and red ornaments and loves things which are red in colour. Flowers according to Tantric traditions are also to be red. Another

Dhyanasloka depicts Ganapathi as seated on red lotus. *Sharada-(Tilaka-Tantra)* describes him as :—

'Kritangaragam nava-kumkumam'

Maha-Ganapathi is said to be 'Arunacchaaya' (reddish like the sun's ray) and Pushkara-Ganapathi is said to be 'sindura' or crimson in complexion.

The 'Bija Mantra' of Ganapathi is 'GAM' 'GA'-kara' along with a bindu (dot) is the seed syllable of Ganapathi :

"Gakaro binduman vighnesrajam Ganesabijakam". The performance of 'Bijanyasa' is as follows :—

गां अङ्गुष्ठाभ्यां नमः।
गीं तर्जनीभ्यां नमः।
गौं मध्यमाभ्यां नमः।
गैं अनामिकाभ्यां नमः।
गौं कनिष्ठिकाभ्यां नमः।
गः करतलकरपृष्ठाभ्यां नमः।

गां हृदयाय नमः।
.....
गः अस्त्राय फट्।

From these mantras it is evident that 'Vighnaraja' is to be propitiated as bedecked in all red attire.

Ganapathi is also described as "tejo-mandala-madhya gatham" (occupying the centre of the fiery triangle or tejomandala).

The evolution of Ganapathi iconography from the Tantric symbols discussed in an earlier chapter may be recalled here in this context.

Sindura-tilaka or red mark on forehead is symbolic of Agnikala or aspect of fire. Kundalini, which is psychic fire rises up from the Muladhara, and shines at the centre of the forehead, where the *ajna* centre resides.

Here the puranic reference to Ganapathi as slaying the demon Sindhura by name by his trunk may be cited. The

demon is said to have had ten heads. These are the ten evil inclinations beginning with 'Kama' (desire) krodha (anger) lobha (greed) mada (envy) etc. He is considered to have come out of Brahma's yawning. Yawning is symbolic of 'tamasa-guna'. All these are symbolic of the victory over evils ; and also Kundalini shining in the centre of the forehead. This is known as the "Kundalini Yoga".

3. PASA AND ANKUSA :- (Noose and the Hoe or Goad)

The symbolic significance may be interpreted as follows:- Ankusa (the hoe or the goad) is used by the mahout to control and guide the elephant. Elephant is symbolic of 'Ignorance' and pasa or noose symbolic of wisdom. i.e., it symbolizes overcoming of ignorance through wisdom.

The controlling weapon on the right (ankusa) indicates the controlling capacity of the brain on the right side of the head.

Banabhatta considers the goad as the ' sadhana" which can overcome the hurdles on the part of learning.

Pasa or the noose is said to be the weapon to control the bondages or fetters of life. It is said that the power of controlling and overcoming the bondages of life lies with the left side of the brain. Hence it is symbolised by the weapon in the left hand of Ganapathi.

These are said to symbolize the deeds, work of the hand they are offering, receiving, differentiating, uniting. Ankusa and pasa are both symbolic of these.

These are not only the weapons of Ganapathi but those of the mother-goddess. The following are the names of Sri Lalitha appearing in the *Lalithasahasranama* :-

Raga-swarupa-pasadhya, and

Krodhakarankusojvala "

Pasa controls the evil of Raga (desire or passion) and *Ankusa* controls the evil of Dvesha (anger or aversion or hate). Pasa is symbolic of Iccha-sakti' (the power of will) and Ankusa, that of 'jnana-sakti' (the power of knowledge).

4. **TUSK** :-It stands for 'concentration' (ekagratha). It is symbolic of differentiation between worshipping idols and the worship of the formless and Supreme Brahman. The elephant plunges its tusks into the earth and uproots even huge trees. The power of "Rudragranthi-Vibhedana" rests in the teeth, in the tantric literature. Thus the tusk is said to differentiate the 'Vyashtipranava': "A", "U", "Ma" and the "Bindu-nada" (M).

Ganapathi is known as 'Ekadanta'. Why and how he became Ekadanta or one-tusked is explained in puranic stories in various ways. The symbolic significance is explained as follows :

It is symbolic of Advaita.
"Adhva" is said to mean 'the way' thereby meaning 'the one way' to attain jnana.

Ganapathi is considered to be the god of learning, hence the broken tusk in one hand is considered as the writing instrument. The same idea is found in Buddhist icons of Ganapathi, also. In Nepal, Tibet and Japan, the broken tusk is shown as being used as a pen.

The right tusk is broken. This is said to mean the conquest of 'Kama' or desire. It is also a puranic idea that this broken tusk was used by Ganapathi for writing 'Mahabharata'. The essence of *Mahabharata* story is the destruction of 'Adharma' or unrighteousness and upholding the principle of 'Dharma' or righteousness. Hence, symbolically, Ekadanta is said to mean the destruction of 'Adharma' and the establishment of 'Dharma'.

5. GAJAMUKHA AND SURPAKARNA :

Puranas state that the original head of Ganapathi was cut off and was replaced by that of elephant. The symbolic meaning of it is explained as follows :

The elephant has certain specialities over other beasts. It is the biggest among the beasts living on earth. Its eyes are disproportionately small to the body. It has the trunk, which it uses as its hand. The animal is known for politeness when tamed. But when angered, it becomes destructive and ferocious. The former swarupa of pranava (OM) is thrice bigger than that of the visible body, it is said. Pranava is the conciousness that governs the body. The elephant helps its kind mahout to get on its back, supporting him by its leg and the trunk. Similarly Ganapathi gives supreme attainment through his grace.

It is explained in terms of the six chakras as narrated in Shatchakra-nirupana. The elephant's head is said to be symbolic of intellectual abilities. Human head is said to be organ of cognition (Jnanendriya). It has Jnanasakti or power of knowledge alone. But the elephant's head is a combination of both the Jnanendriya the organ of cognition and the Karmendriya the organ of action (i. e., the hand-like trunk). The grafting of elephant's head to human body is said to be symbolic of equalization of abilities or the uniting of both the above mentioned indriyas.

Surpakarna means ears which are broad like the winnowing baskets. The symbolism of it is explained as follows :

When the corn is winnowed, the husk is removed. Similarly Ganapathi removes the 'illusion' from 'the real'.

The elephant is capable of hearing even the most feeble sound. Tattvaprakasa and other works speak of this as a Yoga. It is called as "SURA-RAJA-KUMARA-VAIRI-RANDHRA-DHYANA".

Sura raja.....Indra

Kumara .....his son Arjuna

Vairi.....his enemy, Karna

Randhra..... the hole i.e.,

Closing the ears with the fingers and concentrating over the realisation of the "SABDA BRAHMA" is indicated here. This yogic practice is generally followed as a common method of worship by many even to-day. For example, this is in vogue among Sikhs, the devotees of Radhaswamy Satsang in Dayalbagh, and also among the Muhammadans. The external form and experience of it is to be found in Ganapathi worship in what is known as 'DANDA SAMARPANA' (hitting the forehead with bent fingers, and holding the tip of the ears with crossed hands, sitting and standing alternately or danda baski). These may be identified with the varied forms of the same practice.

This may also be explained in terms of "DANDASANA", a Yoga, "DANDABHRAMARI, a dancing posture, "DANDA-TRAYA" the Jain concept of Doshas, and "DANDA PRANAMA" or prostration on the ground like a stick.

Yogic texts hold that there are nine variant 'Sabdas' like Ghosha, Gamsya, Srnga etc, Listening to these various sounds by this yoga is said to yield various results accordingly.

It is also said that one who practices the hearing of the 'Omkara' by this yoga will be free from the fetters of life and the sins etc.,

6. VAKRATUNDA :- (twisted trunk)

It is said to represent 'Omkara' which is the essence of the Vedas.

"OM VAKRATHUNDAYA HUM" is the Ganesha-Shadakshari-Mantra. It is said that Vishnu killed Madhu-kaitabhas (the demons) only with the power of this mantra.

And that Indra was redeemed from the curse of the sage Gautama with the power of this mantra. Subrahmanya obtained the grace of Ganapathi and destroyed Tarakasura with the power of this mantra alone. Vishnu, in his incarnation as Vamana learnt the mantra from his father Kasyapa. It is by the power of this mantra again that Vamana subjugated the great king Mahabali.

This Vakrathunda-murthi is said to be found in front of Kasi-Viswanatha temple. Kasi has another name 'udundi" So Udundi-Vinayaka became Dundi-Vinayaka, the name now in vogue. The symbolism of Vakrathunda may also be explained in terms of the Siddha Philosophy.

7. POT BELLY :- (Lambodara)

This is symbolic of the cosmic womb or 'Brahmanda-garbha,. Man saves the wealth got by his hard work in a safe box. 'Vinayaka' belly is described as a box. The chakra in the stomach is the *Manipuraka*. This is the source of man's desires and ambitions. This is what is described in Ganesa-purana as the ten headed Sindhura, a demon ; and Ganapathi is described as slaying him.

According to Shatchakra-nirupana, this chakra governs the 108 worlds made by earth (prithvi-tatva-bhuvanas) and 56 worlds made of water (ap-tatva-bhuvanas). The chakra must transform and must be overcome for the purgation of the 24 atmatatvas. Kundalini must reach the regions higher up.

Vinayaka is considered as the absolute God or 'Para-brahma'. Hence to indicate that all the universe is part of his stomach, he is considered as having a big belly. It is also said to symbolize 'Akasatatva'.

8. TRINETRA :- (Three eyes)

Generally speaking, a third eye indicates the super-human, all pervading, intuitive ability. It is said that the Pranava or Omkara shines in the left-eye portion as "AKARA", in the

right eye portion as "UKARA" and in the centre as "MAKARA", which is the completion of the "OMKARA". Hence the third eye indicates the complete understanding of the Pranava or Omkara.

Each part said to endow man with: (a) worldly knowledge through the solar aspect or Suryakala, and (b) realization by compassion through the lunar aspect or Chandrakala. Vibration (spanda) is a result of the action of all the three parts of the head. So, the Supreme light is to be seen only with the aid of the third eye. That is the place of the ajna chakra at the region between the eye-brows. It is said to be the chakra where "RUDRAGRANTHI VIBHEDANA" or piercing the knot of Rudra is attained. Here it may be mentioned that in Lalitha-Sahasranama, Sri-Lalitha is described as situated in the space inside the ajna-chakra and as one that pierces the knot of Rudra.

AJNA-CHAKRANTARALA STHITA AND
RUDRAGRANTHI-VIBHEDINI

Thus, the third eye is indicative of the Jnana or wisdom that pierces the darkness of ignorance.

9. MUSHAKA VAHANA :- (Rat as vehicle)

Ganapathi is described as riding on the rat. The rat is said to symbolize "TAMOGUNA". With the grace of Ganapathi 'tamas' and 'rajas' can be overcome. Ganapathi seated on the rat in the embodiment of 'Sattva guna'.

It is also known as 'Akhu', 'Mushaka' etc. It is said to symbolize the evils like anger or Krodha, greed or lobha, moha etc.,

The Puranas say that there was a sage called Saubhari. His wife was Manomaya. A Gandharva known as 'Krauncha' tried to abduct Manomaya. Saubhari cursed Krauncha to be transformed into a rat. Vinayaka who was brought up in Parasara-Muni's hermitage subjugated this rat and made it his vehicle.

Kama or desire symbolised by the rodent, rat. It burrows into the earth or prithvisthana. Ganapathi as said earlier is seated in the Prithvisthana. Hence the fear of Kama is overcome by those who worship him.

Figuratively, the rodent rat or the mouse stands for a shy or timid animal. By worshipping Ganapathi timidity of the soul in reaching the ultimate goal can be overcome.

The rat is capable not only of burrowing into the earth, but it can even penetrate through wood, stone and walls and establish its path. Thus it is symbolic of 'Sushumna' reaching ajna chakra' penetrating through the chakras Muladhara, Svadhishtana, Manipuraka, Anahata and Visuddhi. Thus Mushaka-vahana or rat riding is symbolic of Kundalini rising up and wading through the darkness. He who overrides all these is Ganapathi, the beam of light or Jnana.

10. THE SNAKE GIRDLE AND THE SACRED THREAD YAJNOPAVITA :—

Around the belly of Ganapathi is said to be the Kundalini force. The rat which is symbolic of 'tamas' is said to be scared of this snake, which is said to be the Kundalini force.

Naga is said to symbolise Kundalini force. This is said to be twisted in the form of the coils of a snake. It is said that the coils must be straightened and made to reach the 'Sahasradala' or the centre of one thousand petals. Ganapathi is the deitv to divert the force in that direction.

Scholars who consider Ganapathi as the origin or patron of music and dance interpret the significance of snake-ornament or nagabharana as follows :—

In olden days musicians used to start the alapana with ''ANANTHANANTA''. 'Ananta' means snake. Since it is so it is said to symbolize the Alapanas.

Atma extends over the three areas or Mandalas, Agnimandala, the area of fire, Suryamandala the area of Sun and Chandramandala the area of Moon. Atma is the self luminous beam of light. It governs the body through its positive and negative forces. Negative force is the force acting downwards. This is compared to the snake moving downwards. Kundalini as mentioned above is twisted like the coils of snake. Further, it is in a sleepy state. This is the power of action or Kriyasakti of the Atma. When this is elevated to the head (siras) the Chandramandala or the origin of moon can be attained.

11. POMOGRANATE : It symbolizes the all pervading consciousness or chaitanya. It resembles collection of gems. Similarly, Ganapathi is the fruit of Jnana or wisdom spreading over all the planes of existence (bhuvana).

12. SUGAR-CANE STALK : It is symbolic of kamagni, or the fire of Eros. The lower part of the sugar-cane stalk is very sweet, and the upper part is less sweet. This sweetness is symbolic of Kama or desire. When the Agni or fire goes down below, the sweetness of desire is enjoyed. When the fire of Eros (Kamagni) is lifted up through 'Sushumna' Kama loses its sweet character. This is experienced by Yogis during their practices.

13. MODAKA : (Cake) Ganesha is considered as 'Modaka-priya' fond of modaka. Modaka means ananda or happiness. Ganapathi endows on his devotee bliss (moda) and more bliss (pramoda). Ananda is said to be the aid to Salvation (moksha). Modaka is also said to represent supreme intelligence (mahabuddhi), which understands the highest principle. Ganapathyas claim modaka to be the embryo of life. So it is symbolic of life.

14. BOW : It is said to symbolize 'Pranava' or Omkara. Muladhara and Sahasradala are said to be the two ends of the bow. These two ends are held together by the chord known

as 'Sushumna'. If by this way the arrow called 'lakshya' (aim) is shot, the darkness called 'rebirth' can be shattered.

15. CHAKRA : It cuts through adharma or vice. Hence, it is said to symbolize the establishment of Dharma or virtue.

16. SIDDHI - BUDDHI : In most parts of the south, Ganapathi is worshipped as bachelor or a Brahmachari. In the North he is worshipped as associated with two female consorts (Saktis) Siddhi and Buddhi. He is also said to have two sons through them—Labha (or gain) and Lakshya (or aim) respectively. The symbolic interpretation of Ganapathi may be explained in terms of our social and political life also. When buddhi or Intelligence, is proper the lakshya or aim is formed, and the best ideals are cherished, The capacity to attain the goal of life (Lakshya) is achieved. The result is the 'labha', the gain which is well-being of the whole society.

Those who wish to become leaders must understand the symbolic significance of Ganapathi well. They have to face numerous hurdles in public life through a complexity of human characters, resembling the rat, the snake, etc., they have also to overcome them. They have also at times, to give up their own individual ideas, and respect the ideas of the populace. This is symbolized by 'Ganapathi', loosing his orignal head and being grafted with the biggest of the heads among animals, namely that of an elephant. This is indicative of accommodating the opinions of all people with in ones, own head. Ekadanta or having one tusk only is indicative of the character of non-duality or oneness of the divine aspect. As referred to earlier, the elephant's head is indicative of the union of both the organs of cognition and the organ of action, known in Sanskrit as 'Jnanendriya and the Karmendriya. It indicates that those who become leaders must be both men of thought and action, because Action without thought is folly, and thought without action is abortive. One who can shoulder the responsibility of guiding popular opinion will be full of ideas of wisdom (Jnana) and action

(Karma). One who can maintain the small rat and the biggest elephant both at the same time and can ride on the rat with the elephant's head without the small creature being trampled upon with all his intelligence and alertness and one who can put the enemy forces at bay, can alone hope to become the leader. Thus the symbolic significance of Ganapathi is indicative of all this. One who wants to lead the society must necessarily understand the symbolic significance and practice the implications of it. The so-called leader must have wisdom of the 'aim' to be achieved and the 'tact' or upaya to gain it. This is indicated by the two female consorts (Saktis) Siddhi and Buddhi.

CHAPTER XII

WORSHIP OF GANAPATHI

There are many different practices and methods in the worship and rituals connected with the worship of Ganapathi. Ganapathya-diksha or initiation is to be obtained from one who is proficient in Vedas and Sastras, leading austere life himself having received initiation into the ritualistic worship of Ganapathi. There are certain injunctions in respect of hi food, conduct, daily routine etc.,

There are six varieties or prabhedas in Ganapathi. The are :-

1. Mahaganapathi
2. Ucchishta-Ganapathi
3. Swarna-Ganapathi
4. Haridra-Ganapathi
5. Navanita-Ganapathi
6. Santana-Ganapathi

For propitiating each of these varieties of Ganapathi there are separate rituals, anushthanas, and Vidhis. Tantra sara describes in detail these Ganapathis worshipped in the form of linga, Saligrama, a Yantra, a vase or Kalasa or an icon or Vigraha. Ganapathi-Saligrama are very rare. There is one at Thirunalluru in Tanjore District.

Dr. Gururaja Bhatt (in his *Tuluva history and culture*) points out that there is a Ganesa-linga at Uppuru in Udipi Taluk, South Canara District. A Ganesa-Yantra is also carved on the linga.

SRONABHADRA GANAPATHI :

The Ganapathi symbol worshiped in the daily worship ritual (nityadevatarchana) or the five-fold worship procedure(panchayatana)is known as 'Sronabhadra Ganapathi'. This stone-symbol will be red in colour, hexagonal in shape

and will be of the size of the thumb. It is believed that it is available only in Sronabhadra river.

PANCHAYATANA :

This was a procedure of worshipping five gods together, it was initiated by Sankara. The five deities worshipped are :—

Vishnu, Siva, Sakti, Ganesha and Aditya (Surya). He put an end to the differences that existed among these cults, and he also popularised this collective worship. In panchayatana-puja, Vishnu is the presiding deity. Vishnu-Saligrama occupies the centre. Others are placed and propitiated as follows :

Shiva.....North-east

Aditya..... South east

Ambika.....North-west

Ganapathi.....South-west

The deity propitiated as the presiding deity occupies the centre, and the other deities occupy their respective places.

Generally, in panchayatana-puja, symbols are worshipped instead of idols. They are as follows :

Vishnu.....Saligrama

Shiva.....Banalinga

Surya.....Sphatikamani (Crystal bead)

Sakti.....Loha-sila (metallic stone)

Ganapathi-Hexagonal stone in rectangular form.

The following are the positions in 'Ganapathi-panchayatana' :—

Ganapathi.....Centre
Vishnu..... South-west
Aditya..... South-east
Sakti ..... North-west
Siva..... North-east

While performing vratas and other occasional *naimittika-karmas,* the image of Ganapathi is made out of cow-dung (gomaya) to the size of the thumb (angushta), a few blades of durva grass are placed on the top. He is invoked first for the success of the action undertaken. He is known as 'PILLAYAR' or "PILLERAYA". On such occasions, betal nut broken into two, lump of jaggery etc., are also used as symbols of Ganapathi, who is invoked. Haridra forms (conic forms made of turmeric) are also made and worshipped.

In performing 'Vrathas like 'Samkashtahara Ganapathi Vratha' etc., Ganapathi is invoked into the water pot or kalasa placed on the heap of corn. Those who can afford make gold or silver idols, place them in the vessel called Kalasa, and after the worship give them away as charity or dana. Others offer money or dakshina instead of the idol of Ganapathi.

Ganapathyas believe that worshipping Ganapathi-yantras with the Bijaksharas (seed syllables) on trikona (triangle), Shatkona (six angled figur) (lotus) padma, etc.,) is most powerful. These yantras are mainly four :

1. Ganesha-Yantra,
2. Mahaganapathi-Yantra,
3. Ucchishtaganapathi-Navarnava-Yantra, and
4. Ganapathi-Yantra.

Coral, padmaraga, Blue carbuncle, Diamond, Crystal etc., may be used for worship of Ganapathi. It is said that the benefits of worship depend upon the material thus used.

Each of the above Yantras bear some special significance. These Yantras are propitiated by appropriate mantras, gayatri and Dhyana or meditation. Pranapratishtha or endowing life is adminlstered into the Yantras as :

" mama pranaha iha pranaha " etc.,

The bijakshara or seed syllables of Ganapathi and other deities are written on the yantra. Ganesha Yantra is held in high esteem. It is believed that it endows upon the devotee the best of consciousness. Ganapathyas also believe that 'Advaitatatva siddhi' or realization of the principle of nonduality is accomplished by propitiation of Ganapathi through this Yantra.

MAHAGANAPATHI YANTRA :

It is believed that magical accomplishments or 'Shatkarma-siddhi' like vasya (attraction) and also Jnana (wisdom) etc., can be attained by the ritualistic worship of Mahaganapthi-yantra. It can endow upon the devotee fame and other attainments.

UCCHISHTAGANAPATHI-YANTRA :

By the upasana of this Yantra the evil influences of demons, spirits, imps, Bhuta, Pisacha etc , are counteracted ; and the malignant powers like Pisacha etc., can also be made to possess a person. It can also endow upon the devotee the grace of the seven mother-goddesses, 'Saptamatrikas'. It is firmly believed and experienced that the grace of the Divine Mother and intuitive knowledge can both be attained by making better use of the powers attained by the ritualistic worship or upasana of this Yantra.

According to Gauri-Yamala-tantra, Ganesh-Yantra may be made in the following varieties :

1. Bhuprishta, like the earth-stretch,
2. Kurmaprishta, like the back of the tortoise.
3. Padmaprishta, like the lotus flower.
4. Meruprishta, like the mountain Meru.

Methodic worship (anushtana) of this Yantra results in the endowment of perfect speech (vaksiddhi).

The obtainment of the seed-syllables known as Yantroddara and ritualistic details are explained in works like Merutantra, Saradatilaka, Saktapramoda, Mantramaharnava etc., These must be learnt from a proper guru in order to attain the best results from them.

'GAM' is the seed syllable of Ganapathi, 'GAM', 'GIM', are used for details like the Anganyasa. There are 22 Ganapathi mantras starting from the single lettered Ekakshari. Any of these may be received properly only from the guru.

'Ganapati-Ashtakshari-Mantra' and performances connected with it are explained in "GANAPATHI-ATHARVASIRSHOPANISHAT". The favourite articles of Ganapathi are the durva-grass, Leaves of sami, Arka flowers and all red flowers His favourite number is 21. It is customary to offer puja with 21 different kinds of leaves, 21 sets of durva-grass, and to offer him 21 modakas and 21 namaskara or 21 prostrations or danda (danda - baski). The symbolic significance of red colour has already been discussed in an earlier chapter. Different colours are stipulated for both the propitiator and the deity propitiated, in case of magical rites like the Shatkarmas like Santi, Vasya, Sthambhana, Vidveshana, Uchatana, Marana and so on.

Modaka, Laja, Tila, Sugar-cane, Coconut, plantains and Bijapura phalas (seedy-fruits) etc., are favourite dishes to Ganapathi. These are used both for food offering (naivedya) and sacrificial oblations (homa). It is said that Ganapathi took his birth on Bhadrapada-sukla-chaturthi. Hence the day is very auspicious for his worship (puja, upasana). The fourth day (Chaturti) of the fortnight is also considered auspicious. 'Ganesha-vrathas' are performed on Sravana-sudha-chaturthi and Magha-sudha-chaturthi also.

According to Mudgala-purana, once the Creator adminsitered the "Shadakshara-Ganesha-Mantropadesa" to Prakriti. On account of the power of this mantra. Prakriti appeared

with one part of her body dark and another part white. Chandrakalas emanated from the various parts of her body. Ganapathi ordained that those who worshipped her during daytime on the Sukla-Chaturthi day (bright fortnight) and during night time on the Krishna chaturthi day would get all their desires fulfilled.

The details and conduct of various Ganapathi-vratas are. described in Chapter 72, 179, 312, and 348 of Agnipurana The Ganapathi-Gayatri :

लम्बोदराय विद्महे महोदराय धीमहि
तन्नो दन्ती प्रचोदयात् ।

"Lambodaraya vidmahe mahodaraya dhimahi"

"Tanno danti prachodayat".....is found in Chapter 71 o the said purana (Chaturthi-vratha-kala). This is different from the "Ganapathi-Gayatri" found in Atharvasirshopanishat and Mahanarayanopanishat.

Tuesday is considered to be auspicious for the worship of Ganapathi. Ganesha-purana says that is so because Mangala (Angaraka) is also the son of Shiva and Parvathi THE ANGARAKA CHATURTHI VRATHA. is performed on the Tuesday having chaturthi-tithi on the fourth day of the fort night. It is believed that performing puja, homa, japa, tarpana and offering dana at that auspicious hour brings wealth in this life and also bliss in the other.

Puranas describe many ritual performances (vrathas) for laymen who cannot obtain instruction or upadesa and observe the performance strictly. The main aim of performing these vrathas is to obtain wealth, children, fame etc. The samkalpa itself runs thus :

अस्माकं सह कुटुम्बानां क्षेमस्थैर्यवीर्यविजयायु-
रारोग्यैश्वर्याभिवृद्ध्यर्थं पुत्रपौत्राभिवृद्ध्यर्थं
दृष्टकाम्यार्थसिद्ध्यर्थं समस्तदुरितोपशान्त्यर्थं

"asmakam saha kutambanam kshema-sthairya-virya-vijaya-ayur-arogya-aiswaryabhivrdhyartham, putra-pautrabhivrdhyartham ishtakamyartha-sidhyartham samasta-duritopa - santyartham" etc.,

Among the many Ganapathi vrathas, the most famous and popular one is the 'Varasiddhi-vinayaka-vratha'. It is celebrated everywhere both by individuals at home and as a collective social function. It is done in the Bhadrapada month of the Hindu year.

Various Ganapathi-vrathas are prescribed for the removal of various hurdles and sufferings of life Some of them are discussed here :

1. VARADA-CHATURTHI-VRATHA : It is initiated on the Sravana-suddha chaturthi day the fourth day of the bright fortnight of the Sravana month and continued upto Bhadrapada suddha chaturthi day (the fourth day of the bright fortnight of next month). In this period everyday puja is offered to Ganapathi, and a brahmin is fed with dishes favourite to Ganapathi. At the end of the vratha a Ganapathi idol made out of gold and silver is offered as gift to him. If it is an idol made of earth that is worshipped it is duly immersed in water. The details of this vratha are found in "Ganesha purana Upasana Khanda" (Chapters 86-87).

2. DURVA-GANAPATHI VRATHA : This is performed on the Vinayaka-Chaturthi day, or when Chaturthi falls on Sunday. The vratha initiated on that day is continued for one month with all the details of Shodasopachara puja. Everyday six durva-grasses, six modakas (cakes) and six namaskaras (prostrations) are offered. On Bhadrapada sukla chaturthi (Vinayaka chaturthi day) 21 durva-grass, 21 modakas and 21 namaskaras and 21 dandas (prostrations) are offered to Ganapathi.

3. GANESHA - PARTHIVA - PUJA - VRATHA :

It is observed from Sravana suddha Chaturthi to Bhadrapada suddha Chaturthi. On the first day after the sacred bath etc.,

a Chaturbhuja-Ganapathi idol is prepared out of pure clay or mud collected either from the river bank or from an ant-hill. It is adorned with jewells and other ornaments and placed in a a specially prepared mantapa and life is introduced into it; pranapratishta is administered into the idol. Puja and japas are performed according to the ritualistic prescription or kalpas; and after a month's puja etc., the specified homas etc., are performed; brahmins and housewives and suvasinis are fed. After these, the idol is taken in procession and immersed in water. The following are the number of idols worshipped for obtaining various results :—

For accomplishing a great work....	1 or 2	Ganapathi idols
For wealth ...	3.....	,,
Four Purushartha siddhis (dharma, artha, kama and moksha)	4...	
Kingly status or position of lordship....	5	,,
Creative abilities.....	6.....	,,
Intuitive knowledge.....	7, 8, or 9	,,
Grace of all the other gods....	10	,, etc.,

Ganesha purana (Upasana khanda, chapters 49-50) gives details regarding the number of days the vratha has to be done for freedom from the fear of imprisonment, diseases etc.,

4. SAMKASHTAHARA - GANAPATHI VRATHA : This is to be started on the Sravana-bahula chauti (the fourth day of the dark fortnight in Sravana) and performed for one year. The vratha is performed at night times on every bahula-chauti. By observing this vratha all hurdles are meant to be overcome.

5. GOMAYA GANAPATHI PUJA : This is performed for immediate benefits. , A Ganapathi idol is prepared out of gomaya or cowdung and the puja is performed according to prescriptions. Sugar-candy is offered as naivedya. The Ganapathi is immersed in water, after the Puja.

6. BALAMURI GANAPATHI PUJA : An idol of Balamuri Ganapathi (trunk twisted to the right) is made out of clay or mud and pujas performed for obtaining specific benefits. After the puja the Ganapathi is preserved in a box or a shelf. After the fulfilment of the desire of the worshipper the idol is immersed in water after the performance of another puja in detail.

Tantric texts and Saiva Agamas describe the methods of propitiating Ganapathi in Tantric ways for the attainment of 'Shatkarma-siddhi', Abicharayoga, Viniyoga etc., many of these are of 'Tamasika-svarupa (of wicked and evil kind). Such vrathas without proper guidance of the guru or the experienced preceptor, are dangerous and must not be undertaken. In Bengal even today the following method of propitiating Ganapathi for the enrichment or growth of wealth is prevalent. Male and female children are invited. They are considered as the very form (svarupa) of Gauri and Ganapathi. They are given all the pujas and offered new clothes and sweet dishes which are favourite to Ganapathi.

1. VALLABHA GANAPATHI VRATHA : The worship of Ganapathi with consort is recognised by both Sakta and and Ganapathya cults ; it is also called Maha-Ganapathi.

SIGNFICANCE OF VALLABHA GANAPATHI :

The story of Vallabha - Ganapathi and its significance are described in *Bhargava-purana*.

Marichi was one of mind-born children (manasa-puttra) of Brahma. He learnt from Brahma that Ganapathi is the very Parabrahma. He got a boon after penance that the Divine Mother be born to him as his daughter and that Ganapathi, the 'Siva-svarupa' must become his son-in-law. Accordingly, after some time a conch appeared before Marichi. This transformed into a female child. It was named as Vallabha. When she came of age, as per the boon, Marichi gave her in marri-

age to Ganapathi. Vishnu & Lakshmi also came forward to give their 12 daughters Moda, Pramoda, Subhaga, Sundari, Mano rama, Mangala, Kekini, Kataka, Charuhasa, Sundari, Nandini & Kamada in marriage to Ganapathi. Ganesha agreed to it and gave his Visvarupa darshana to Vishnu and gave him the mystic instruction or upadesa. According to this purana, Sadasiva-Manonmani and Ganapathi-Vallabha are identical.

The symbolism of this may be explained as follows :- Vallabha, the Sakti, is actually Kundalini. Marichi is the ray of fire or tejomandala. The shakti brought up by him is given to Vinayaka, the veritable form of Para-brahma. The twelve daughters of Vishnu are the twelve powers which were hitherto maintained for the existence of the body, viz the twelve dehatatvas. These are surrendered to the Para-brahma by Vishnu (the preserver or sthitikara) the lord of existence. Thus the duty of existence is fulfilled and the mystic instruction (upadesa) obtained from the Parabrahma, Ganapathi himself.

THE FORM OF VALLABHA-GANAPATHI :-

Vallabha-ganapathi is depicted with four hands, holding a pot filled with jewells (ratnakalasa) in his trunk. The female consort Vallabha is seated on his left thigh. The hand possessing the broken tusk embraces her. He has in his hands Pomogranate, mace or gada, sugar cane stalk, bow, discus or chakra, lotus, noose or pasa, blue water lily, spike of paddy-corn and the broken tusk.

The Maha-mantra of Vallabha Ganapathi is as follows

ॐ श्रीं ह्रीं क्लीं ग्लौं गं गणपतये
वर वरद सर्वजनं मे वशमानय
स्वाहा ॥

(Om Srim Hrim Klim Glaum,
Gam Ganapathaye vara-varada sarva-
Janam me vasamanaya, swaha :)

The meaning of it may be interpreted as follows.

Om : is the '*Anda Kosa*' that encircles the human body. 'A', 'U', 'MA' indicate 'sristhi' (creation), sthiti (preservation), and laya (destruction) and the transcendent 'bindu' is Naga.

SRIM – consists of S + R + I + M

S — is the bija in Muladhara

R — is the bija in Swadhishthana

I — the stages of light in the Siras like Soma, Surya and Agni. It is also known as Mahalakshmi Bija.

Sa — Mahalakshmi

Ra — Wealth

I — Contentment

M — (Nada) Iswara.

HRIM :-

Ha — Siva

R — Prakriti

I — Mahamaya

M — (Nada) sakti

This is also called 'Mahamaya Bija'. The Divine Mother Bhuvaneswari, the Lady of all the worlds (bhuvanas) is propitiated in this Ekakshara.

GLAUM :—

Ga — Ganesha

La — Prithvi (Earth)

Au — Tejas (A+U) (fire)

M — (Bindu) removal of the sorrow or duhkha

The sound 'Ga' emanates from the root of the tongue (Uvular sound). The sound 'La' is in Prithvi and in Swadhishtana. The combination of 'Gla' is symbolized as

Ganapathi's trunk. So this is the 'Bijakshara' of Ganapathi. The combination of the three letters (Ga + La + Aum) indicates the conjunction of the throat and the Prithvi-sthana. The proper functioning of this leads to the rise of Kundalini from the throat upwards.

GANAPATHAYE :-Indicates Ganapathi in red complexion, having the trunk.

Ga — Movement, ie., in the direction of the liberating knowledge.

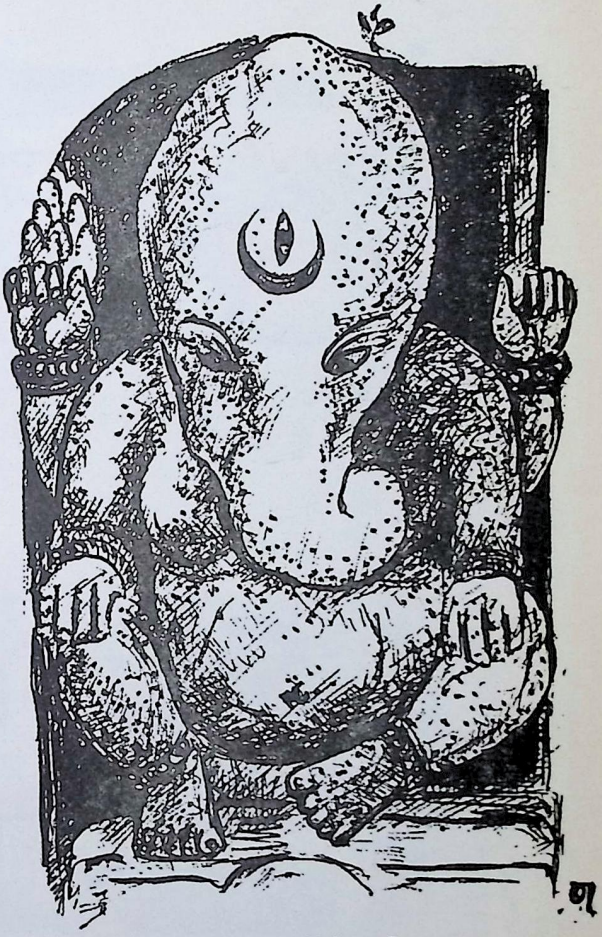
Na — Moksha (salvation)

Pathi — the supreme Being or the lord.

VARA VARADA :—He who bestowes the desired things.

SARVA JANAM ME : Indicates the twelve dehatatvas governed by Vinayaka.

VASAMANAYA SWAHA : Let all the twelve dehatatvas be possessed. That means praying that Ganapathi may take full possession of the soul (Atma) and illumine the soul (Atma).



Dhundhi–Ganapathi from Banaras

An ancient image of Ganapathi in bold relief found in Fatehgarh district, and made in spotted stone peculiar to the Mathura area

An ancient metallic image of Ganapathi (now in British Museum)

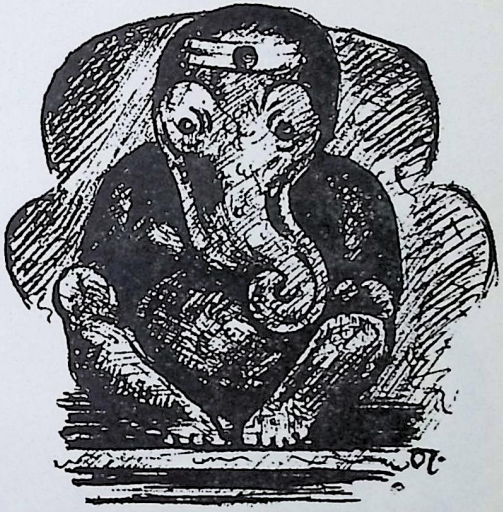
Mayureshvara–Ganapathi from Moregaum (Maharashtra)

Two-armed Ganapathi from
Gokarna (Karnataka)

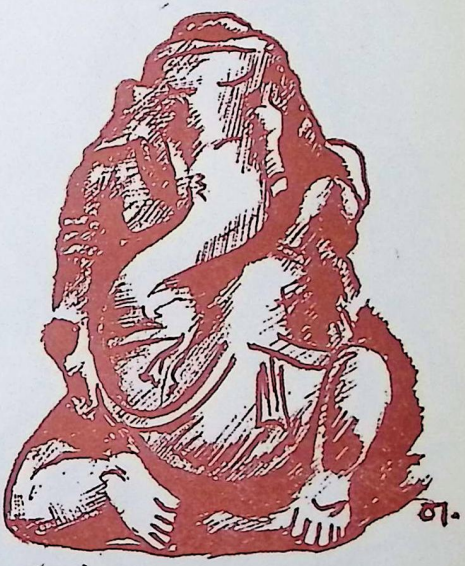
Two-armed Ganapathi from Idugunji (Karnataka)

Belmannu Ganapathi from Karkala (Stone)

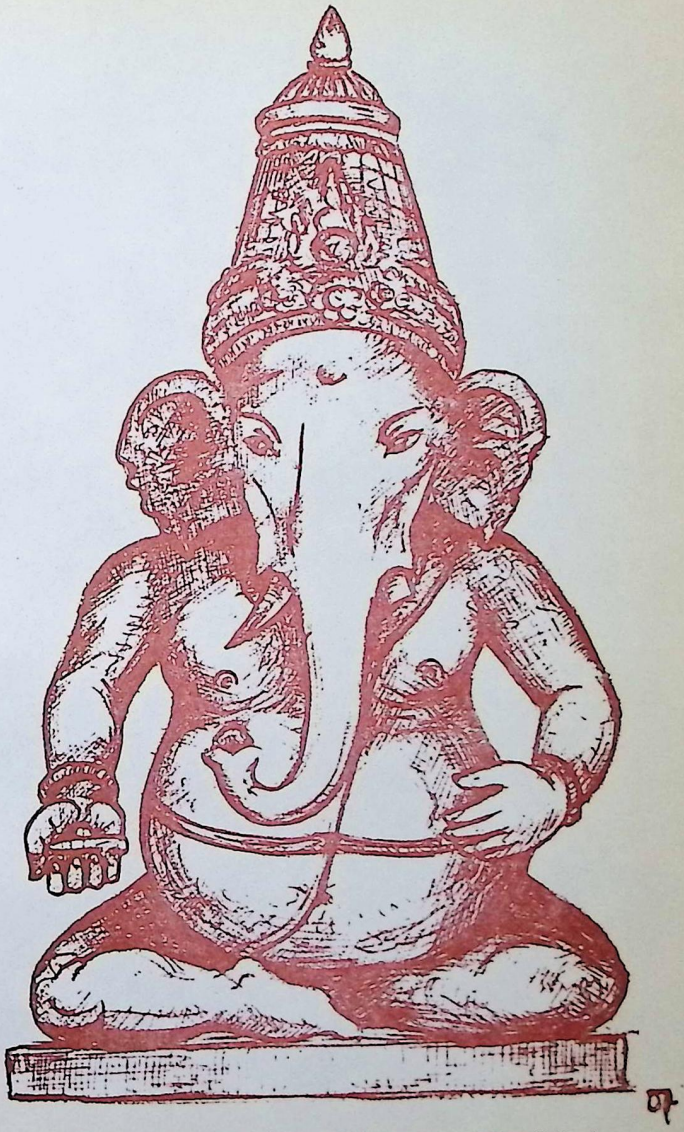
Madhu-Kaitabha-Varada Ganapathi
(from Siddhatek)



Tripurari-Varada Ganapathi
from Ranjangaum (Maharashtra)

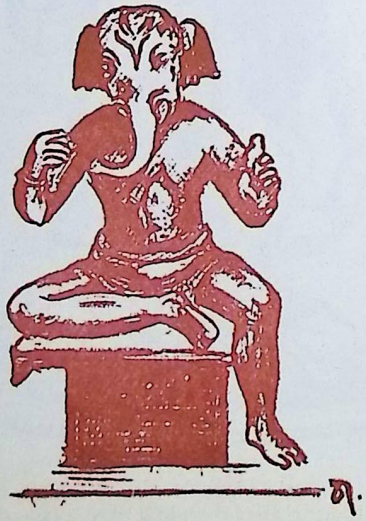


An ancient Ganapathi as Yaksha
from Bikkavolu (Andhra Pradesh)

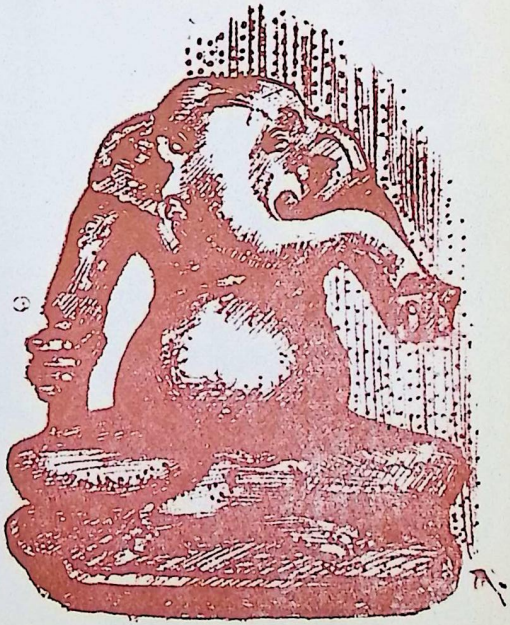


Arbhaka-Ganapathi from Pillayar-patti (Tamil Nadu)

Two-armed Ganapathi from Cambodia (14th Century), represents Ganapathi as patron of learning, tusk as pen in one hand and book in the other



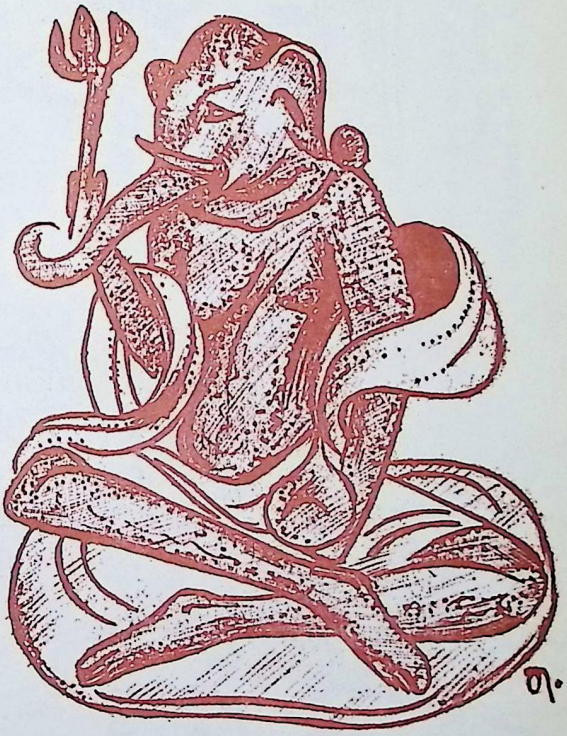
Ganapathi from China
(Bronze image)



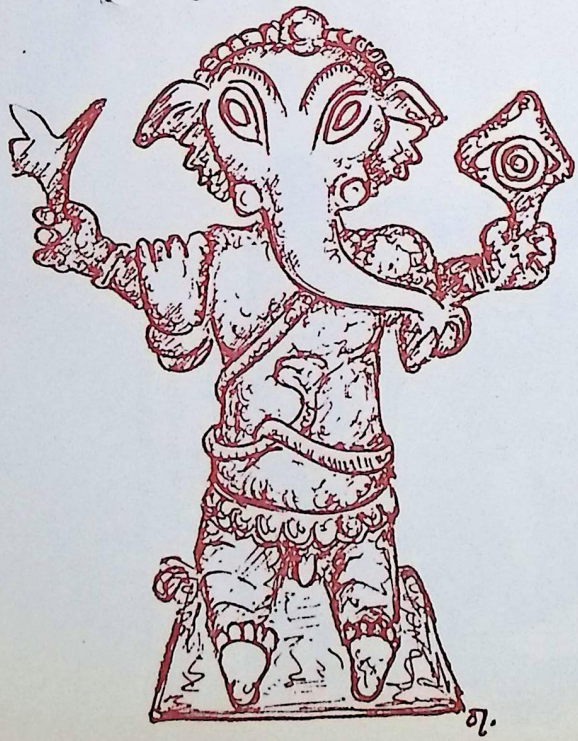
Pre-Khmer Ganapathi (before 8th century)
found at Turol-Phak-Kim in
Kondal (Indo-China)

A form of Ganapathi known as Garbha-dhatu-Vinayaka from China or Japan, holds a Carrot in one of the two hands. The significance of the Carrot is not known

An ancient Ganapathi image from Sri-Lanka



Ganapathi from China (Bas-relief)



Bala-Ganapathi from South Kanara (Karnataka)

An ancient image of Ganapathi
from Tumkur
(Jalagara-dibba), Karnataka

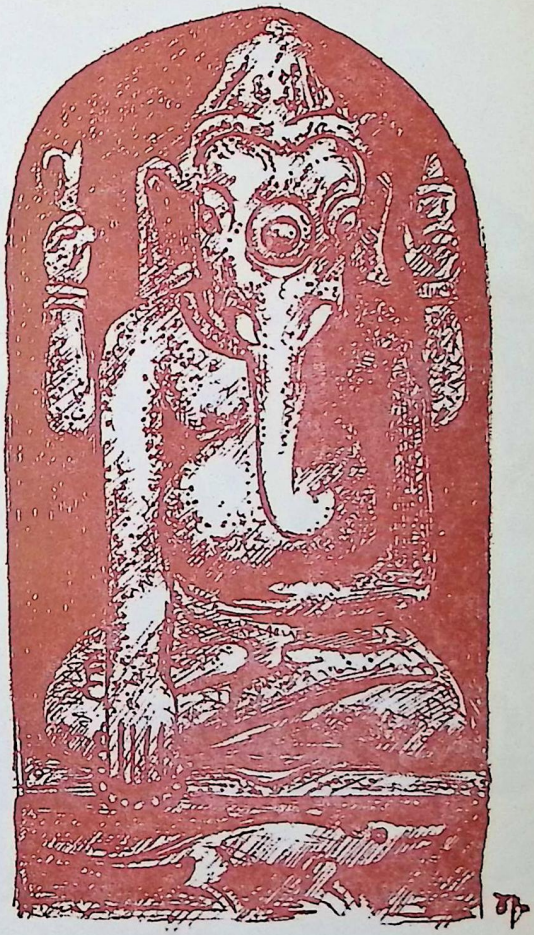
Ganapathi from South India
(10th–12th century)

Vatapi-Ganapathi from Tiruvarur

Madhuru-Ganapathi from Kasaragodu
(Karnataka)

Varada-Ganapathi from Nepal
(Bronze image)

Ganapathi from Borneo
There is also an inclusion of
Buddhist features

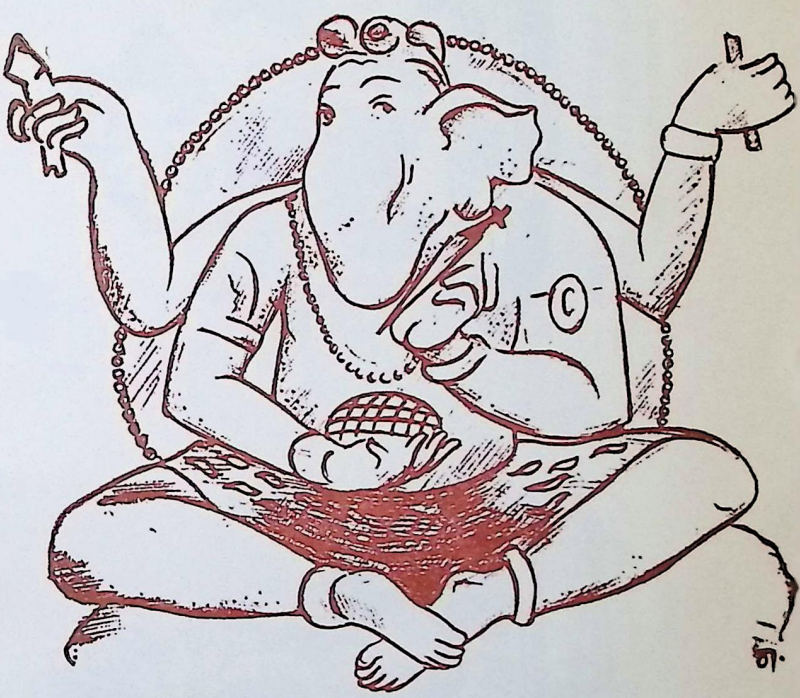


Ganapathi as Buddha in 'Bhu-sparsa-mudra' from Cham ; Buddha is also called Vinayaka

Ganapathi as Buddha (Alabaster image)

Ganapathi from Java (Djembe stone image) about 13th century. The back of the head represents the stylized lion-face known as 'Kirti-mukha'

Ganapathi from Tjandi-Singasari (Jawa)



Ganapathi from Chinese Turkistan (Endere)

Ganapathi from Nepal
(Metallic image)

Ganapathi represented as a child
(in the likeness of Bala-Krishna)
A rare representation

Nrutta-Ganapathi from Vedaranyam (Tamil Nadu)

Kurma-Vahana Vighnesvara from an old Siamese manuscript (now in Ecole Francaise d' Extreme Orient at Hanoi). He holds the wish - fulfilling gem (Chintamani) in one of the hands.

Ganapathi riding on rat—relief from
Panagallu (Andhra Pradesh)

Composite image of Hanuman, Ganapathi and Garuda from the Kolaramma Temple, Kolar, in Karnataka. The ears of the elephant-head have been moulded to represent the profiles of Hanuman & Garuda

Heramba-Ganapathi from Nagapattanam (Tamil Nadu)

Ucchishta-Ganapathi from Dharasuram Temple (Tamil Nadu)

Sakthi-Ganapathi from Bundel Khand
(6th Century)

Sakti-Ganapathi from South India (with Consort Lakshmi)

Heramba-Ganapathi with Sakti (from Tibet)

Vyaghrapada-Ganesani from Madhurai Temple
(Tamil Nadu 17th Century)

Kangi-ten form of Ganapathi from Japan

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